

Sigma posts \$3.1b revenue

SIGMA has reported sales revenue for the 2015 financial year up 5.7% to \$3.1b year on year, with earnings before interest and taxes at \$78m, up 11%.

Net profit after tax was down 1.4% to \$52.7m as a result of a tax-free one-off gain of \$10.9m in the 2014 financial year, Sigma said.

Revenue growth had been driven by acquisitions of Central Healthcare Services (CHS) (PD 27 Mar) and Discount Drug Stores (PD 09 Sep), as well as organic growth with higher volumes, tighter cost management and broadened revenue mix, the report said.

Fifty one Amcal and Guardian banner members had been added in 52 weeks, the company said.

The start of the 2016 financial year was seeing growth in line with that achieved in 2015, it said.

Corporate affairs manager Gary Woodford said Sigma expected to invest \$100m in new warehouses and a range of beauty and healthcare initiatives over the next three years.

Sigma had acquired land in Berrinba in Queensland, and was building a facility in Eastern Creek Sydney for CHS, Cooper said.

The company had announced a number of new initiatives recently, including data analytics technology for pharmacy as well as Sigma Financial Services, a financing program to help with a range of activities including the acquiring and selling pharmacies and fit out solutions, he said.

[CLICK HERE](#) for the report.

Call to review future of CPAs

HEALTH groups have written to the Minister for Health calling for a review of the future of Community Pharmacy Agreements (CPA), following "grave concerns" about the findings of the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)'s report on the audit of the administration of the 5CPA (PD 06 Mar).

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, the Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) and the Consumers Health Forum wrote to the Minister this week, saying of "significant concern" was the ANAO finding that performance reporting and evaluation frameworks were "wholly inadequate" for assessing whether the 5CPA was value for money.

"It is a major issue that 90% of

the funding delivered by the 5CPA, relating to pharmacy remuneration, has not been reviewed since 1989."

The groups said the CPA had failed to deliver real improvements in the quality use of medicines (QUM) and that pharmacy location regulations stifled improvements such as pharmacy opening hours and price competition, which were driven by competition.

"It is also unlikely that the savings promised from the 5CPA will be achieved.

"If this is indeed the case, this must be addressed as a priority."

The groups called for a review looking into such things as the modern means for distribution of medicines and international best practice.

"In the absence of such information, we question the merit of committing to a further five years of such an agreement."

RACGP president Dr Frank Jones said further CPAs should not be entered into until improvements in the quality use of medicines could be "assured" and said as part of the review, the RACGP was keen to work with government, the Guild and other stakeholders on developing a new agreement with greater focus on QUM initiatives.

The Pharmacy Guild said contrary to the assertion that the 5CPA had not enhanced QUM, clinical interventions pharmacists intercepted and redressed prescribing errors and potential adverse drug reactions every day.

"Pharmacists have also been at the forefront of the advent of electronic prescribing to minimise errors."

Executive director David Quilty called on the RACGP to support switching on of dispense notifications from the prescription exchange services, so GPs would know whether medicines had been dispensed, and when.

"This will enable GPs to become partners with pharmacists in helping enhance the Quality Use of Medicines outcomes for their patients."

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the RACGP's statement.

Closing the rural and remote health gap

ABORIGINAL and Torres Strait Islander people, mainly in rural and remote areas of Australia, still remain disadvantaged with regards to the number of health services available to them, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) national president Grant Kardachi has said.

Recognising the increased costs of running a remote area pharmacy business, PSA has created a Community Pharmacy Agreement discussion paper identifying starting points for improvements.

[CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Revamped Fred site

THE Fred IT Group has revamped its website, with integrated social media channels and ease of navigation to access Fred IT solutions, including Fred NXT.

A new Fred Shop selling hardware and stationery online would be launched next month as a section of the site, the company said.

Fred IT Group ceo Paul Naismith announced the launch at APP.

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the site.

New CHF ceo

LEANNE Wells is the new Consumers Health Forum (CHF) ceo, replacing Adam Stankevicius.

Wells had 25 years' experience in senior executive government and NGO roles, and had formerly led the ACT Medicare Local, CHF chair Tony Lawson said.

Wells would take up the position in mid-April, he said.

Pseudoephedrine real-time records

THE Baird Government has committed to the introduction of mandatory online recording of pseudoephedrine sales in pharmacies if re-elected in its plan to combat the problems of ice.

As first reported by the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the new measures will also include more funding for treatment and rehabilitation services.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more.

AZ drug shortage

ASTRAZENECA has advised that there is a disruption to supplies of suxamethonium chloride 100mg/2mL injection BP ampoule.

There were no safety concerns with existing product, the company said, and supplies should resume in May.

AstraZeneca said the shortage was due to a delay in supply of the active ingredient.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration said it was attempting to source the skeletal relaxant from an approved European supplier through a section 19A exemption.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more.



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Events Calendar

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

21-22 Mar: Mental Health First Aid; Parramatta; for more details visit: www.psa.org.au

28-29 Mar: Paediatric Seminar; Adelaide; see: www.cpd.shpa.org.au

31 Mar: Cardiovascular Update: Atrial Fibrillation and Anticoagulants; St Leonards; more at: www.guild.org.au

14 Apr: Pharmacy Live webinar; details at: www.psa.org.au

14 Apr: Cardiovascular Update: The Role of Pharmacy; St Leonards; see: www.guild.org.au

15 Apr: Short Course – Chronic Disease Management -Respiratory; St Leonards; more info at: www.psa.org.au

18-19 Apr: Victorian Pharmacy Conference; Monash University, Parkville; visit www.psa.org.au/conferences

21 Apr: Instigo and PKF Lawler Retail & Business Improvement Master Class; Newcastle; click here for tickets and further details: www.proticket.com.au

22 Apr: Short Course – Chronic Disease Management -Arthritis; St Leonards; details at: www.psa.org.au

22-23 Apr: Safety in Action Brisbane, Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, see: www.safetyinaction.net.au

2 May: Bridging the Gap; Bathurst; more info at: www.psa.org.au

9 May: HIV Workshop introduction; Melbourne; see: www.cpd.shpa.org.au

CAPiTA vaccination trial

ELDERLY patients 65 years and older can be successfully vaccinated against the 13 serotypes of pneumococcus in Prevenar 13, a pneumococcal polysaccharide conjugate vaccine from Pfizer, according to the results of the Community-Acquired Pneumonia Immunisation Trial in Adults (CAPiTA) published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

CLICK HERE for abstract of the trial.

Webstercare founder honoured

GERARD Stevens, founder and md of Webstercare, was awarded a Master of Pharmacy (honoris causa) by the University of Sydney on 06 Mar.

Stevens delivered an Occasional Address for the University of Sydney Faculty of Pharmacy 2015 graduation, sharing reflections from his 48 year career in pharmacy, and encouraging students to focus on patients' medication adherence, the University said.

Wealthy pharmacists story hurt

THE Pharmacy Guild has said the owner of the pharmacy pictured in the background of a photo featured in a story saying the Community Pharmacy Agreements were turning one in six pharmacies into million dollar businesses (**PD** 16 Mar) was "bewildered and hurt".

Fairlight Pharmacy's new owner told the Guild she was not a millionaire and struggled to make her business viable, the Guild said.

CLICK HERE for the Fairlight story.

APP credentialing talk

ASSISTANT director of credentialing at the Australian Pharmacy Council Andrew Matthews presented at APP on the need for credentialing for Advanced Practice and the benefits of pursuing the qualification.

CLICK HERE for the presentation.

Jardiance AusPAR

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DISPENSARY CORNER

YOU'RE banned!

If you've ever had to deal with difficult customers in your pharmacy, you could consider taking the route of Evesham Mayor Randy Brown, who banned the public from asking questions at town council meetings.

Brown made the move after a citizen called him a jerk, *Associated Press* reported.

Apparently, 81 year old Kenneth Mills asked Brown a question about taxes, and when Brown spoke over him, Mills told him he was acting like a jerk.

However, good news for freedom of speech and lengthy debates about tax - Brown reversed his decision, with Mills commending the council for once again taking questions, the publication reported.

THAT'S a lot of medication.

We've already reported on the opportunities for pharmacists in aged care (**PD** 06 Feb) but if the US Social Security records are anything to go by, pharmacy better get cracking, what with the 6.5m people who supposedly reached the age of 112 this year.

Reportedly, the attorney general said Social Security did not have death records for millions of those who would be 112, most of whom would not be alive given there were only 42 people that old in the entire world last year, *Associated Press* reported.

A Senate Committee is working to make it easier for Social Security to maintain more accurate death records, to avoid issues with identity theft, the publication reports.

Apparently, the Internal Revenue Service estimated it paid out US\$5.8b in fraudulent tax refunds in 2013 because of this issue, the publication reports.

WIN A LIFETEMP RADIANT THERMOMETER



This week *Pharmacy Daily* and *Airssential Home Health Care Solutions* are giving away five LifeTemp Radiant Non-Contact Thermometers (RRP \$79.95).

The new LifeTemp Radiant Thermometer integrates simplicity of use, advanced infrared technology and ergonomic design, the company says. According to Airssential, the LifeTemp Radiant Thermometer has been clinically validated for accuracy and provides precise temperature readings instantly: it is perfect for professional use or for domestic use at home, with no need to replace probe covers, which means no ongoing costs. The company suggests that LifeTemp Radiant can also measure room temperature, and other surfaces including bath water or even the temperature of babies' milk. Learn more at Airssential.com.au.

To win, be the first person from **VIC** or **TAS** to send the correct answer to the following question to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

What technology does the LifeTemp Radiant Thermometer use?

Need a hint? [Click here.](#)

Congratulations to yesterday's winner Muthi Ahmmed, from Tennant Creek Pharmacy.

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Postal address: PO Box 1010, Epping, NSW 1710 Australia

Street address: 4/41 Rawson St, Epping NSW 2121 Australia

P: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760) F: 1300 799 221 (+61 2 8007 6769)

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Publisher: Bruce Piper

Editor: Alex Walls info@pharmacydaily.com.au

Reporter: Mal Smith

Advertising and Marketing: Magda Herdrik advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au

Business Manager: Jenny Piper accounts@pharmacydaily.com.au

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