

Sigma diabetes test

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals has launched a national pilot program in its Amcal and Guardian pharmacy networks to systematically test patients for diabetes.

New pharmacy-based standard testing equipment measures patient HbA1c from a pinprick, and is able to "accurately tell patients in a convenient and efficient way if they need to be referred to a GP for further consultation".

The trial scheme is assessing two different technology solutions for testing HbA1c, with blood taken by the pinprick test analysed over six minutes - providing a more accurate indication than glucose testing.

Initially being tested in 15 Amcal/Guardian stores in four states, the program will be rolled out across the national network if successful.

Patients first complete the AUSDRISK assessment questionnaire to ensure undiagnosed people are not unnecessarily tested.

Pharmacists at the pilot stores have undergone additional training to ensure patients are appropriately tested, counselled and referred.

SA health job cuts

SOUTH Australia Health has announced the outcome of stage 2 of its review of the state's Department of Health and Ageing, with a reduction of 73.9 full time equivalent head office positions.

The review focused on reducing red tape and avoiding duplication, and follows the previous outcome in Feb which resulted in the loss of 25 executive roles and 425 staff from the organisation's head office.

Guild resolute on 6CPA

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has reiterated its commitment to negotiating the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement "in good faith with the intention of concluding an agreement ready to commence on 1 July 2015".

Yesterday the Guild issued a statement in response to an article in the *Australian* newspaper, which it said contained a "garbled account of the current state of the negotiations, laced with deliberate distortions aimed at portraying the Guild adversely".

The report claimed the Guild is "resisting" accountability and "holding out for higher funding," with a spokesperson categorically rejecting the suggestions.

"It has been widely reported that the government is linking the Agreement to a very large amount of savings from the wider PBS, with figures of around \$6 billion over five years speculated upon.

"These savings would have a significant negative flow-on impact on pharmacies and must be taken into account when assessing the net value of any Agreement offer,"

Hepatitis C approval

GILEAD Sciences has confirmed TGA approval for its Harvoni (ledipasvir/sofosbuvir), which is the first daily single tablet regimen for the treatment of genotype one chronic hepatitis C in adults.

The TGA approval follows a positive recommendation from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee to PBS list the drug.

the Guild said.

It's estimated that when taking these savings into account the "bankable net value" of an \$18.9 billion offer would be actually just over \$16 billion - compared to the \$15.7 billion in the Fifth Agreement.

"Pharmacies would have an 8% cut in their total remuneration compared to the last Agreement despite being expected to dispense 10% more scripts," the Guild said.

MEANWHILE the *Australian* report suggested the Sixth Agreement would include a doubling of funding for pharmacist programs and professional services, to a total of \$1.2 billion over the next five years - a move which was welcomed by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia.

However the PSA also raised concerns about some proposed PBS savings measures such as delisting OTC medicines, the \$1 discretionary dispensing fee and proposed co-payment increases, because of their potential impact on Quality Use of Medicines principles.

AND in an interview on *The Conversation* yesterday, Health Minister Sussan Ley dispelled suggestions that there was a "war with pharmacists" over the 6CPA.

She said the negotiations are "definitely not unfriendly."

"The Pharmacy Guild is doing the best for their members, I'm doing the best for taxpayers and affordability for consumers."

Ley added that it was her "personal view...that I don't want to see pharmacy in supermarkets at the moment".

Zostavax on the NIP

SHINGLES vaccine Zostavax is to become available on the National Immunisation Program (NIP) for older Australians.

Manufacturer bioCSL welcomed the move which represents the addition of the first adult vaccine to the NIP in more than 10 years.

Consequently, Australians in their 70's will be able to receive free Zostavax vaccine on the program with a catch-up program for those aged between 71-79 years.

The vaccine costs around \$200 on a private script.

Jayex partners MD

JAYEX Self Check-in Kiosks has announced a partnership with Medical Director (MD) to facilitate more rapid patient check in at clinics and the opportunity to update contact details at the same time.

The kiosks (pictured) operate in 51 languages, with any updated information automatically updating Medical Director software.

The kiosks also have the capacity to conduct patient surveys, Jayex said.



RGH E-Bulletin

THIS week's RGH E-Bulletin looks at the role of statins post intracerebral haemorrhage, highlighting that conflicting data makes the decision-making process complex.

CLICK HERE to access the bulletin.



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TGA presentations

PRESENTATIONS given by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) at the 2015 ARCS Scientific Congress in Sydney last week have been uploaded to the TGA website.

A wide range of topics are covered, including the regulation of stem cells, changes to the TGA's Clinical Trial Notification process, a pharmacovigilance forum and TGA business services improvements.

TGA national manager John Skerritt also presented on recent developments in international convergence of regulation and collaboration with other agencies.

CLICK HERE to access the site.

Guild Update

Beanies for Brain Cancer

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia charity partner, Cure Brain Cancer Foundation, has been inundated with orders for its beanies, which help raise money for brain cancer research.

On accepting her Gold Logie award recently, Carrie Bickmore donned a beanie and paid tribute to her late husband who lost his fight with brain cancer five years ago.

The beanies for brain cancer feature the collector's edition Cure For Life brand that launched Cure Brain Cancer Foundation.

Earlier this year, the National President of the Pharmacy Guild, George Tambassis, embarked on his first skydive to mark the beginning of a partnership with the Cure Brain Cancer Foundation.

The Guild will continue to partner with Cure Brain Cancer Foundation to raise awareness of this devastating condition.

To order your own beanies for your pharmacy visit the Cure Brain Cancer Foundation website.

\$34m for Medical Stockpile

TONIGHT'S Federal Budget will include a \$34 million allocation to replenish the National Medical Stockpile, supporting the "restocking of essential drugs, vaccines, antidotes and protective equipment," according to health minister Sussan Ley.

Announced yesterday, there's also \$64 million for the National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre in Darwin, which together with the stockpile "are the backbone of our national health emergency management capability in the event of a bio-terrorist attack or devastating natural disaster".

Ley said recent disease threats such as the bird flu pandemic and

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, as well as last year's flu season "reinforce the importance of maintaining our strategic reserve of drugs, vaccines and antidotes".

The Darwin-based response centre coordinates the rapid and effective deployment of medical assistance teams in the event of both domestic and international crises such as the recent Vanuatu cyclone.

Ley said the combined \$98m funding package means Australia continues to be well prepared to respond to a health emergency at home or abroad.

New APC directors

PRESIDENT of the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) John Low has announced the appointment of four new directors to the APC Governing Council.

Council has appointed Professor Nick Shaw and Ms Gayle Ginnane for a further three year term and Professor Iqbal Ramzan and Ms Monica Schlesinger to commence their 1st term.

Low said that outgoing Dr Ian Coombes will remain as Chair of the APC Credentialing Committee.

The new directors will attend their first Council meeting on 25 May.

PHARMAC vaccine storage tender

THE New Zealand Pharmaceutical Management Agency (PHARMAC) has issued a request for proposals (RFP) for the supply of national vaccine storage and distribution services, initially for the period from 01 Aug 2015-30 Jun 2017.

PHARMAC also revealed that it's reviewing current vaccine purchasing and distribution arrangements, which "could result in some changes from mid-2017.

CLICK HERE for details.



DISPENSARY CORNER

THIS canine truly wanted to bite the bullet.

A veterinarian in the US state of Arkansas has kept a dog from going out with a bang, after the animal ate 23 live rifle rounds, according to the *Baxter Bulletin*.

The dog's owner, Larry Brassfield, said the four-year-old Belgian Malinois called Benno had a voracious appetite, having previously eaten many socks, marbles and magnets.

However he was somewhat surprised that the dog was attracted by a bag of bullets he kept by his bed (yes, only in America).

Sarah Sexton from All Creatures Animal Hospital removed 17 rounds from Benno's stomach, but left a number in his digestive canal which he was allowed to discharge on his own.

A JAPANESE hotel is engaging in some mental health therapy, with the launch of "crying rooms".

Designed especially for women under stress or dealing with emotional issues, the rooms at the Mitsui Garden Yotsuya Hotel in Tokyo are provided with a selection of sad movies, as well as an array of "luxury tissues" which they can use to "gently wipe away their tears".

A spokeswoman said the rooms are designed to allow female guests to "cry heartily in comfort".

"Crying helps people combat stress," she said.

Once they've discharged their angst, the hotel also provides make-up remover and steam eye masks to help guests rejuvenate that puffy complexion.

A special promotion is offering the rooms for \$100 per night in a "ladies moderate single".

The hotel didn't mention whether stressed men could also rent the crying rooms.

WIN WITH DESIGNER BRANDS

This week *Pharmacy Daily* and **Designer Brands** are giving readers the chance to win DB's new Blur Primer (RRP \$14.99), new DB BB Lips (\$6.99) and CC Concealer Pen (RRP \$12.99).

Blur products or 'photoshop finish' products are the hottest trend right now, with women looking to get the airbrushed

finish we see on red carpets and glamorous events. Designer Brands has all the hottest Blur products at the lowest prices. As well as the Blur Primer, Designer Brands is also giving away the new BB Lip Balm and the simple to use, multi-functional CC Concealer Pen (RRP \$12.99).

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

Is the new Blur Primer under \$15?

For more info **CLICK HERE**.

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Gayleene Chapman from Health Focus Pharmacy.

