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## Ley flags major pharmacy review

HEALTH minister Sussan Ley has flagged “the most significant independent and public review of the pharmacy sector ever conducted,” with findings from the two year probe set to feed into future pharmacy agreements.

Significantly, the review will look at both remuneration to the pharmacy sector as well as regulation including location rules.

## AHI instead of markup

THE new Administration, Handling and Infrastructure fee to be introduced as part of the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement (PD yesterday) aims to provide pharmacists with greater stability in the price of medicines, according to health minister Sussan Ley.

The AHI will replace the existing pharmacy mark-up system by providing a simpler, more transparent set fee which will be paid on a per-script basis.

The new fee will maintain dispensing remuneration at the average cost under the Fifth Agreement, and will cost the govt \$1.5 billion over five years.

“It also provides pharmacists with pricing certainty by delinking their remuneration from the variability in medicines prices brought about by price disclosure,” Ley said.

## \$10k NPS prize pool

NPS Medicinewise is offering a prize pool of \$10,000 for entries in its #savethescript short film competition, in partnership with the Tropfest film festival (PD 15 May).

Health professionals and students are encouraged to make a short film or community service announcement of up to 45 seconds to “help spread the word about antibiotic resistance”.

## 6CPA program scrutiny

ALL pharmacy professional support programs - both new and existing - will be “scrutinised and approved” by the government’s independent Medical Services Advisory Committee, with the move part of an increased focus on evidence-based medicine and transparency.

The new measure was confirmed by health minister Sussan Ley, as further details of the “letter of intent” between the Guild and the government emerged (PD yest).

Ley said a key component of the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement would be a doubling of investment in patient support programs to \$1.2 billion over five years, including a greater focus on regional and rural services.

“This is recognition of the increasingly important role pharmacists play in a patient’s ‘medical team’ of health professionals,” Ley said.

MEANWHILE the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has hailed the investment in patient support programs, with acting president Michelle Lynch saying the additional allocation for evidence-based

## Endo buying Par

ENDO Pharmaceuticals has announced a definitive agreement for the acquisition of generic maker Par Pharmaceuticals, with the deal valued at US\$8.05 billion.

The Par portfolio includes almost 100 products in a range of dosage forms including oral solids, oral suspensions and injectables.

Endo, which relocated its head office from the US to Ireland last year, said the deal would “drive double digit growth,” with Par CEO Paul Campanelli to join Endo and head up its generics business.

professional services is “exactly what PSA has been advocating for”.

She said the allocation, which is the biggest in any agreement to date, would amount to some 7% of the total 6PA budget “and will bring surety to continuation of services such as medication reviews over the next five years.

“This is a truly ground-breaking agreement for professional services, and we look forward to supporting pharmacists delivering these services, for the benefit of consumers,” Lynch said.

## NSW student of the year

### BRIGID

Carey, a pharmacy student at the University of New England, has been named the PSA NSW Pharmacy Student of the Year.

She was presented the award (right) last weekend by PSA NSW branch vice-president, John Chapman who said the competition had once again showed an “exceptionally high standard” from participants.

Brigid will now compete against other state finalists at the PSA conference being held at Sofitel Sydney Wentworth 31 Jul-02 Aug.

The competition is supported by API and Alphapharm, with Charbel Azzi of Alphapharm and Andrew Rewell of API also pictured above.



## DMF in digital form

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has made the Drug Master File (DMF) Administrative Details form available online, meaning that product sponsors are able to complete and submit it in digital format.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

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## RGH weekly E-Bulletin

**THE** Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome (NMS), a rare but potentially lethal complication associated with some antipsychotic (neuroleptic) drugs, is the topic of this week's Repatriation General Hospital Pharmacy E-Bulletin.

NMS can also be associated with metoclopramide and domperidone - **CLICK HERE** to access the bulletin.

## Guild Update

### 6CPA letter of intent

The letter of intent signed by the Guild and the Federal Government is a positive step towards a new Community Pharmacy Agreement.

The Agreement will enable Australia's 5,450 community pharmacies and their staff to continue meeting the health care needs of their patients.

The Agreement will cover the issues of pharmacy remuneration for dispensing PBS and RPBS subsidised medicines; wholesaler remuneration including the Community Service Obligation; the Pharmacy Location Rules; and Professional Programs and Services.

Community pharmacies must have certainty so they have the necessary confidence to continue investing and employing staff.

The Guild is particularly pleased the Government has recognised the clinical importance and value of dispensing through an increase in dispensing remuneration.

The new Administration, Handling & Infrastructure Fee (AHI) is a structural reform which will substantially delink dispensing remuneration from the price of medicines, enabling the Government to continue its PBS reforms whilst not jeopardising standards of patient care.

## BI's Pharmaxis purchase

**BOEHRINGER** Ingelheim has announced the acquisition of a key investigational drug from Australian listed pharmaceutical research company Pharmaxis.

Dubbed "PXS4828A," Boehringer Ingelheim says it plans to develop the drug for the treatment of the liver-related condition NASH, and to prevent its consequences.

NASH is the progressive form of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, which is the most common liver disorder in Western nations.

"It is regarded as a major cause of fibrosis and cirrhosis of the liver, and is an area of high unmet clinical

need," Boehringer Ingelheim said.

The company has also acquired other SSAO/VAP-1 inhibitor molecules and associated patents.

Pharmaxis ceo Gary Phillips said the deal was a "transformational event" for the company.

"With a total potential value in excess of \$750 million, it is a globally competitive deal and significant for the Australian biotech sector," he said.

Phillips said Boehringer Ingelheim's clinical expertise would now be applied to the further development of the drug.

Pharmaxis will receive an upfront payment of about \$39 million, and a range of milestone payments based on the continued successful development and commercialisation of the drug.

The commencement of Phase 2 and 3 clinical trials will see payments of up to €55 million, while regulatory milestones linked to applications for marketing approvals in major markets such as the USA, EU, China and Japan will see the payment of €140 million.

Further earn-out payments will also be payable based on tiered percentages of sales.

BI will be responsible for all development, regulatory, manufacturing and commercialisation activities.

## Elderly eschewing pneumococcal vax

**LESS** than one-in-five Australian adults at-risk of pneumonia have vaccinated themselves against the often-fatal lung infection, according to the Lung Foundation.

New research, being released to coincide with Pneumonia Awareness Week 17-24 May, reminds patients 65 and over to vaccinate, while the study also showed that more than 35% of Australians aged 18 to 64 are at increased risk of contracting pneumococcal pneumonia, due to smoking or a chronic medical condition.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

**A FINE** upstanding Rx for malaria.

That magic little blue pill sildenafil (Viagra), the darling of many men challenged by erectile dysfunction, has now found yet another potential use as a treatment for malaria, according to new work published in *Australian Popular Science*.

Also able to assist in other conditions such as hypertension, altitude sickness, and prostate cancer, sildenafil is able to make infected red cells stiff, or less "squishy", enabling the spleen to easily weed out the hardened cells, the authors explained.

Researchers believe this may be the first step towards new types of antimalarials.

**DO HOLD** your breath.

If you are about to suffer from a painful needle injection, take a sharp intake of breath and hold, to reduce the pain effect, says a *New Scientist* report.

Gustavo Reyes del Paso at the University of Jaén in Spain tested whether holding your breath, a stress-free way of raising blood pressure and triggering the pressure sensors, might also raise a person's pain threshold.

He found that as long as the pain is anticipated, such as in the case of a vaccination needle, holding your breath is more effective than slow breathing.

**107** and not out - that's a pretty good innings in anyone's book.

A great-grandmother in South Africa just celebrated her 107th birthday, attributing her long life to "good food and genetics".

Nomkwahlazo Busuku has 56 grandchildren and "too many great-grandchildren to count".

Her relatives said she "despised" visiting the doctor, and believes there is nothing that cannot be cured by vegetables.

## WIN A BRAUN THERMOMETER

This week, **Pharmacy Daily** and **FGB Natural Products** are giving away a Braun Touchless + Forehead thermometer each day.

Introducing a revolution in thermometers: the Braun Touchless + Forehead. With the first-ever ability to switch between stress-free 'Touchless' mode or traditional 'Touch' mode plus Braun's patented satellite sensors, it's the most accurate touchless technology yet. Also featuring a colour changing display, guidance system and Braun's user-friendly, sophisticated design. For more information visit [www.fgb.com.au](http://www.fgb.com.au) or phone 1800 033 431.



To win, be the first from **QLD** to send the correct answer to the following question to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

**True or false: The Braun Touchless + Forehead is the first ever forehead thermometer that can be used in touch or touchless mode.**

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Vivienne Kaye from Boehringer Ingelheim.

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