



Digest deadline

THE Pharmacy Guild is advising members this is the final week for submissions to the annual Guild Digest Survey.

The information received will feed into the 44th edition of the Guild Digest which will present a snapshot of pharmacy operations in Australia for 2014-15.

The Digest asks for simple standard business metrics such as turnover and expenses, with the Guild saying it enables better representation through the development of economic models and the creation of accurate forecasts and scenarios.

CLICK HERE to access the survey.

Priceline pays off for API

AUSTRALIAN Pharmaceutical Industries today reported an 18.1% increase in underlying net profit after tax, with a figure of \$25.3 million for the six months to 29 Feb.

Including the previously announced \$2.4m loss on the sale of CH2 (**PD** 27 Nov 15) the statutory result was up 7.7% to \$22.9m.

Total revenue for the six month period rose 4.4% to \$1.79 billion, with ceo Stephen Roche saying the company had "again delivered strong growth for shareholders through executing a clear strategy that is centred on building the Priceline Pharmacy network,

while generating sustainable returns through pharmaceutical distribution".

The total Priceline network grew to 425 stores, with 7.1% growth in retail sales to \$583.4m, with Roche saying the major infrastructure investments made in the business over the last eight years had allowed it to become a leading health and beauty retailer.

"The brand remains strong on all fronts," he said with total sales, consumer loyalty, store network numbers and the pipeline of new stores all increasing.

API's pharmacy distribution business saw a 1.5% lift in revenue to \$1.23 billion, and excluding the impact of PBS reforms, the growth was 7% year on year.

"Our extensive platform of services to pharmacy has sustained our sales growth through conditions that remain testing and highly competitive," Roche said.

"The suite of services available across Soul Pattinson, Pharmacist Advice and our Club Premium program underpins the ongoing success of our relationship with independent pharmacists".

API said it expects current trading performance will continue during the second half subject to normal seasonal variations, with a 2.5c per share interim dividend declared.

Parkinson's blood test

DIAGNOSING Parkinson's Disease (PD) is usually by clinical signs and symptoms and the expertise of a neurological team but may soon be diagnosed by a blood test.

Human studies using the test, which detects a biological marker in the blood, have delivered 95% accuracy in La Trobe University work led by microbiologist Professor Paul Fisher.

The research team, including Sarah Annesley and Danuta Loesch-Mdzewska, have received a significant \$640,000 funding boost to continue the research, half the money coming from the Michael J Fox Foundation in the United States and half from Australian partner organisation 'Shake It Up'.

Vaccine guidelines

WITH World Immunisation Week being recognised Apr 24-30, this is a timely reminder of the need to remain ever vigilant about vaccination, according to Dr Frank Jones, president of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

Since it was introduced to the world and to Australia in 1932, vaccination has saved millions of lives with vaccine-preventable diseases falling by 99%, both here and overseas, he said.

The RACGP has released updated guidelines on vaccination covering all aspects.

See www.racgp.org.au.

Support Milton's London-Paris ride

MILTON Burrell, who consults to several pharmacy groups and was formerly with API and Good Price Pharmacy, is looking to raise \$10,000 for breast cancer research.

He's off to the UK with some other "cycling nutters" to ride from London to Paris, with the 300km 24 hour ride starting at 4pm on Sat 30 Apr at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich.

The riders will arrive a day later at the Eiffel Tower, and Burrell, whose wife is a cancer survivor,

is supporting the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

The fundraising has so far reached \$6,000 and the Healthyworld Pharmacy Group in Brisbane is currently selling bottles of water for \$1, with 50c from every purchase donated to the cause.

To support the ride **CLICK HERE**.

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Pharmacists lobby on s100

THIS group of pharmacists from the NT and WA were in Canberra this week to meet with officials and politicians advocating for fairer remuneration for the dispensing of chronic disease scripts under the Remote Area Aboriginal Health Services Program.

The RAAHS is a special supply arrangement administered under Section 100 of the National Health Act, allowing patients to receive medicines from a community pharmacy under the PBS without the need for a script and without cost to the patient.

The pharmacists were aiming to resolve issues around the regulatory and remuneration arrangements "which have not kept



pace with current best practice in terms of quality use of medicines for these patients who often have multiple chronic diseases".

They were advocating changes to the program so the remuneration for PBS medicines dispensed under the scheme is consistent with normal remuneration for other patients in any other community.

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Smokeless tobacco dangers campaign

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has launched a campaign to educate rural, white male teenagers about the negative health consequences associated with smokeless tobacco use.

Messages on the dangers of smokeless tobacco use, including nicotine addiction, gum disease, tooth loss and multiple kinds of cancer, are for the first time being highlighted in advertisements in 35 US targeted markets.

"Not only is the target audience using smokeless tobacco at a high rate, but many do not fully understand the negative health consequences of their actions," said Mitch Zeller, director of the FDA's Center for Tobacco Products.

"In communities where smokeless tobacco use is part of the culture, reaching at-risk teens with compelling messaging is critical to help change their understanding of the risks and harms associated with smokeless tobacco use," he said.

Male dementia drops

CHANCES of getting dementia for men has fallen dramatically by 40% in the last two decades as they gradually adopt lifestyle measures of women, according to a report in UK's *The Times*.

With men smoking less, eating more healthily and adhering to beneficial therapies such as statins for cholesterol, and antihypertensives, they are giving themselves longer lives and less neurological complications.

Meanwhile, women's risk of dementia has remained fairly static over the same period.

Causes of dementia include middle age hypertension, other cardiovascular problems including elevated cholesterol, alcohol abuse, familial genetic influence and poor general health, health authorities said.

Dementia itself manifests in memory failings and confused thinking resulting from gradual damage to the brain, and takes many forms, the most common of which is Alzheimer's Disease.

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ROYAL Caribbean has launched huge savings and free upgrades for upcoming 2016/17 summer voyages.

The cruise company has announced that any new bookings made by 30 Apr 2016 onboard their international style megaliners *Explorer of the Seas*, *Voyager of the Seas*, *Radiance of the Seas* or *Legend of the Seas* 2016/17 summer season will receive up to 30% off.

New oceanview bookings of five nights or longer will also receive a free upgrade to a balcony stateroom - go to www.royalcaribbean.com.au.

Hawaii special offer

THE Celebration Travel Company is offering a free dolphin encounter and daily breakfast in conjunction with a five night holiday package in Honolulu.

Priced from \$1,599 per adult and \$145 per child aged 3-12 years, the deal at the Embassy Suites Waikiki Beach Walk also includes round trip airport transfers and a three day Go Ohau card giving access to 32 local attractions.

See your travel agent or call 1300 880 571.

HepC cash flow solution

A **NEW** supply model to manage pharmacy cash flow issues around hepatitis C therapies needs urgent implementation to ensure patients have timely access to treatments, says Pharmacy Guild of Australia executive director David Quilty.

Writing in the Guild newsletter *Forefront*, Quilty re-emphasised the Guild's positive attitude to the listing of these medicines which for the first time gives some 230,000 Australians living with hepatitis C affordable access to a cure for this life-threatening disease.

On 01 Mar four hepatitis C medicines were listed on the PBS: Harvoni, Sovaldi, Daklinza and Ibvayr and then on 01 May, it is expected that the combination medicine, Viekira PAK, will also be subsidised.

Quilty makes the point that the price to pharmacy for each monthly dose of Harvoni is \$22,136.61 plus GST and for Sovaldi is \$19,367.69 plus GST, creating an unprecedented pressure on the cash flow of any pharmacy business because of the timing of Business Activity Statements.

"The maximum mark-up for wholesalers is \$69.94 and the maximum Administration, Handling and Infrastructure Fee for

pharmacies is \$70," he said.

Considering the markup is only 0.28% of the cost of a month's supply of Harvoni, for example, Quilty argues that these remuneration levels are insufficient for pharmacies and wholesalers to bear the cost and the risk of stocking these medicines.

Under the terms of the 6CPA, the earliest these remuneration issues could be considered by the Pharmacy Remuneration and Regulation Review is Mar 2017.

Quilty calls for a "pseudo-consignment model" to be put in place, whereby pharmacists would be able to supply the product and not be required to pay until having sufficient time to get reimbursed by Medicare and by the ATO for the GST on the cost.

He also called for a "reasonable returns policy" whereby the pharmacy is not left stranded with the medicine when patients fail to collect for a variety of reasons.

Quilty emphasised that while the Guild is working hard with manufacturers and wholesalers to manage a solution, the government needs to be ready to intervene to ensure there is agreement by manufacturers, wholesalers and the Guild by 01 May.

DISPENSARY CORNER

THE future of pharmacy or a glimpse into the past?

Giant US supermarket-styled pharmacy chain Walgreens has been snapped advertising "flu shots" in strange proximity to certain stock.

How many Australian pharmacies still sell alcohol?

None of course, given that it is illegal, and hardly supports healthy lifestyle promoted by pharmacy.

It is OK though to sell iced coffee (look closely at the **picture**).

Apparently that's not a problem that Walgreens have to face.

PD has been assured the picture is not photoshopped!



Win with DESIGNER BRANDS

This week *Pharmacy Daily* and Designer Brands are giving away a Make Me up Pro Brush set each day.

Brushes are the key to flawless makeup application, and with the Designer Brands Make Me Up Pro Brush Set you will always look like you've had your makeup done by a professional. With each brush individually labeled, even makeup novices will know which tools to choose to achieve the perfect makeup look.

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What colour are the brushes?

Check here tomorrow for today's winner.

RESEARCHERS in Italy have used genealogical records to identify 35 living people whom they say are related to Leonardo da Vinci.

Historians Alessandro Vezzosi and Agnese Sabato have been tracing the Renaissance genius' family tree since 1973, and this week held a media conference which was attended by some of da Vinci's relatives - but not direct descendants since he had no children.

Most still live in Tuscany, and they include acclaimed film director Franco Zeffirelli - who ironically won a Leonardo Prize from the Italian govt in 2007.

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