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Vic real-time monitoring

THE Victorian government has announced funding of \$30 million for the implementation of a Real Time Prescription Monitoring (RTPM) system.

The measure will be introduced as part of the 2016-17 state budget, with the government saying it's taking action to reduce the number of people dying from prescription drug overdoses.

"A real-time monitoring system will help our medical clinics, pharmacies and hospitals better identify prescription drug seekers earlier, before their addiction escalates into serious harm," said Vic health minister Jill Hennessy.

The funding will cover Schedule 8 medicines such as oxycodone and morphine "at a minimum" with the government also to consult with professional medical and pharmacy groups to determine the best way to include other high-risk medicines such as diazepam.

As well as rolling out the new monitoring software, the

government will fund additional counselling and addiction treatment services as well as providing training and support for doctors and pharmacists.

"Once implemented the system will allow clinicians at 1900 GP clinics, 1300 pharmacies and 200 hospitals to do an on-the-spot check before prescribing or dispensing medicines that are at high risk of misuse," the announcement stated.

The Guild and the PSA welcomed the move, saying they looked forward to continuing to work with the Vic government and other health professions and groups "to see the successful implementation of this vital RTPM system that will prevent avoidable prescription drug overdose deaths".

Half off for SHPA

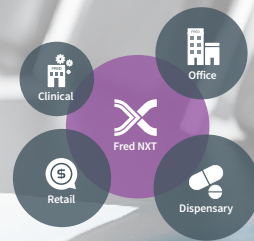
THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists has a half price offer for membership of the Australian & NZ Association for Health Professional Educators (ANZAHPE).

The discount is valid for new memberships finalised by 5pm on 13 May, offering 12 months ANZAHPE participation for \$130.

Benefits cited include access to the ANZAHPE Fellowship Scheme, access to formal mentoring in health professional education and eligibility for research grants, prizes and awards - see shpa.org.au.

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Pharmacy tech regos

THE US state of Ohio is considering new legislation which would require pharmacy technicians to be registered.

The proposed bill is in part a response to the US epidemic of addiction to prescription drugs, with the Ohio Pharmacy Board saying pharmacy technicians were responsible for about a third of drug thefts from pharmacies over the last three years.

Ohio is one of just eight US jurisdictions that does not license pharmacy technicians, of whom there are estimated to be more than 40,000 working in pharmacies across the state.

"With the current system, if a pharmacy technician engages in theft from a pharmacy and their employer chooses to fire them or allows them to resign, nothing keeps them from going down the street and getting another job," said Ohio Pharmacy Board executive director Steven Schierholt.

Ohio also plans to cap painkiller scripts to a maximum 90 days supply.

£112m for British GPs

ENGLAND'S National Health Service has announced a funding boost of £112 million for GP practices so they can employ clinical pharmacists in-house.

The funding injection follows cuts to pharmacy worth £170m announced just before Christmas - the subject of a special presentation at APP by National Pharmacy Association chairman Ian Strachan (**PD** 22 Mar) - which are threatening the closure of thousands of UK pharmacies.

Ca++, vit D cardiac risk

DESPITE previous concerns over the potential for calcium with or without vitamin D to create cardiac problems, a very large prospective study has demonstrated that calcium supplementation was not associated with increased risk of hospital admission or death following cardiovascular events.

CLICK HERE and go to abstract #P311 in the *Osteoporosis International* April supplement.

CSL celebrates 100 years

COINCIDING with ANZAC Day, the country's largest and most successful biotechnology company, CSL, has officially celebrated 100 years of operation as of yesterday.

Originally established in 1916 by the Australian Government as 'Commonwealth Serum Laboratories', its mission was to ensure the island nation had reliable access to therapeutic sera, vaccines and other life-saving biological products during times of war and other global threats.

As such it was a small branch of the Quarantine Department, but has now grown to a formidable publicly listed \$45 billion global speciality biopharmaceutical company.

CSL operates in more than 30 countries with a staff of over 16,000 across the globe.

The company's centenary

celebrations will continue across this year with a range of special events including the launch of a new \$25 million medical research fellowship program, gala birthday parties, an exhibition at the Melbourne Museum and the release of a specially commissioned documentary film and book.

"CSL has an important heritage but an even brighter future," said ceo Paul Perreault.

"These centenary celebrations are a tribute and a testament to our values, science, people and the patients we serve, yesterday, today and tomorrow," he said.

A special centenary microsite is now live at www.csl100.com.au.

MA still recruiting

PHARMACEUTICAL industry peak body Medicines Australia (MA) continues to recruit for its ceo role following the exit of Tim James prior to Christmas 2015 (**PD** 21 Dec 15) and the interim appointment of Lee Hill (**PD** 14 Jan 16).

Recruitment firm Brooker Consulting calls for a "seasoned senior executive" with "clarity of thought, strength of leadership, and influence to drive tangible outcomes for Medicines Australia and its constituents" as well as having "a passion for the vision and values of the organisation".

NZ Council chief

MICHAEL Pead has been named as the new chief executive of the New Zealand Pharmacy Council.

He takes over from Claire Paget-Hay who has been acting in the role since the departure of former ceo David Simpson in Feb.

Pead has a "wealth of experience from previous leadership, business, advisory and management roles," said chair Mark Bedford.

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Guild Update

Pharmacy Connect

Online registration and accommodation bookings for the Pharmacy Guild's new national conference, Pharmacy Connect, are now open.

Pharmacy Connect will be held in Sydney on 9-10 September at the newly refurbished Four Points by Sheraton Sydney, Darling Harbour.

The program will include future-focused business and clinical education sessions, a trade exhibition with 60+ exhibitors, Welcome Reception and Gala Dinner.

The event has been developed to meet the need identified by pharmacy owners, pharmacy managers and manufacturers for an industry conference in the second half of the year which replicates the successful components of the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference (APP), and where the Pharmacy Guild can launch initiatives from the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement, along with private initiatives.

Full registration fees include access to sessions, morning and afternoon teas, lunches, a Welcome Reception ticket, conference satchel, handbook and a DVD of conference sessions (Gala Dinner tickets are an optional extra).

Registrations received prior to 1 June 2016 will go into the draw to win 3 nights' accommodation at Four Points Sheraton Sydney, Darling Harbour.

For pricing around registration and accommodation, go to www.pharmacy-connect.com.au.

More post-market reviews

THE Health Department has announced post-market reviews for Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (PAH) medicines and bDMARDs (biological Disease Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drugs) for the treatment of chronic plaque psoriasis.

In the case of PAH drugs the review has been initiated because the PBAC's Drug Utilisation Sub Committee (DUSC) considered the PBS restrictions for these medicines are not consistent with current treatment guidelines.

The post-market review follows a submission from the sponsor of bosentan, epoprostenol and macitentan to remove the requirement for patients to be assessed as having achieved a response to treatment in order to continue accessing the medicines.

The submission claimed this PBS restriction was inconsistent with best clinical practice.

The PAH review will cover other medicines too, including iloprost, ambrisentan, sildenafil and tadalafil.

For the bDMARD review, the PBAC has noted emerging evidence of variation in response to TNF-alpha (Tumour Necrosis Factor-alpha)

inhibitor agents and recommended a cost-effectiveness review for the drugs when used to treat severe chronic plaque psoriasis.

The bDMARD review will cover adalimumab, etanercept, infliximab and ustekinumab.

Both reviews are open for submissions from 02-16 May, with draft terms of reference now online at www.pbs.gov.au.

New tab film coating

PHARMACEUTICAL formulation and film coating company Colorcon has announced what it calls "a breakthrough" for pharmaceutical tablet coating, with its launch of Opadry QX flexible film coating.

The company says the product greatly reduces production and preparation times, ensuring coating process efficiency and cost savings.

Jason Teckoe, senior manager for product development said the firm's research "confirms that Opadry QX provides operators with broader latitude to manage critical settings for optimal film coating such as tablet bed temperatures, spray or air flow rates."



DISPENSARY CORNER

WHAT'S in a name? Quite a lot, when it comes to product marketing - a factor which may even feed into the names of items in your pharmacy dispensary.

Researchers in Switzerland have published a study on the so-called QWERTY effect, which found that product names featuring more letters from the right-hand side of a computer keyboard are viewed more positively by people.

The scientists from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich studied millions of English-language product names, books and movies on popular internet sites such as YouTube and Amazon.

Looking at opinions of the items they found reviews were much more likely to be positive for products with more letters from the right hand side of the keyboard.

Previous studies have noted an increasing popularity of baby names with a higher proportion of letters from the keyboard's right side, correlated strongly with the rise of QWERTY keyboards since the 1960s.

MARKETING agencies in Brazil have come up with a way to tackle the global rise of the Zika virus, with the invention of a so-called "sweaty billboard" which can apparently kill mosquitos.

The inventors say the insects are drawn to a special lactic acid solution released by the signs which mimics the scent of human sweat and carbon dioxide.

Once they arrive at the billboard they are trapped inside, with a free blueprint of the Mosquito Killer Billboard released by the inventors who are encouraging people across the globe to make their own versions.

If you want to get busy the plans are now available for download by **CLICKING HERE**.

Win with Bosisto's

This week Pharmacy Daily and Bosisto's are giving away each day a Bosisto's EucoSteam Inhaler combo and EucoSteam Inhalant 200mL.

Bosisto's EucoSteam Inhaler is a portable and easy way to use warm steam inhalation for colds & flu. Just fill the lightweight inhaler with hot water (adding Bosisto's Inhalant for soothing eucalyptus vapours) and inhale the steam to help clear nose and chest congestion. Naturally soothing relief, anytime, anywhere.

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To win, be the first from NSW or ACT to send the correct answer to the question to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

What condition, or symptoms, would you use Bosisto's EucoSteam Inhaler to treat?

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