

Guild Update

Guild asks PBAC to review PBS de-listings

THE Pharmacy Guild has written to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) asking for a review of the de-listing from the PBS of a number of commonly used medicines that are also available without a prescription.

As part of the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement negotiations, the Guild agreed to the de-listing of selected over-the-counter medicines from the PBS on the clinical recommendation of the PBAC. This agreement was based on the Federal Government's commitment that the de-listed medicines would be available over-the-counter at prices comparable or lower than what patients pay under the PBS.

It is now clear that this is not the case with Panadol Osteo, which is a recommended first-line therapy for the pain management of osteoarthritis.

The Guild is concerned that many people with chronic, debilitating osteoarthritis will have increased difficulty in affording their treatment and we have asked the PBAC to undertake its own analysis of the over-the-counter prices of the de-listed medicines.

If it is confirmed by the PBAC that these products are not available at prices below the price paid by Concessional Card holders under the PBS, the decision to delist should be reviewed in consultation with relevant consumer groups such as Pain Australia and Arthritis Australia.

PBS co-payment roll-out

THE Department of Health officially rolled out its Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme this week, which includes an expanded Safety Net and more medicines to "better match resupply intervals to the listed quantity and use of the medicine".

Effective from January 01, the Government says that the revised scheme has been brought on to align with changes in the consumer pricing index and will see general co-payment increase from \$37.70 to \$38.30; concessional patient co-payments to grow from \$6.10 to \$6.20; with the general patient Safety Net upped from \$1,453.90 to \$1,475.70; while the concessional patient safety net threshold surges from \$366.00 to \$372.00.

Despite Government reasoning, the PBS scheme has come under fire this week, with the Pharmacy

Guild of Australia crying foul play, yesterday stating that the one dollar discount is a cost that's "borne by the pharmacy, not the Government".

"The discount is in fact a budget cut, saving the Government an estimated \$373 million by delaying patient access to the safety net," said the Guild.

"The Guild does not support - and has never supported - discounting of the patient co-payment, as it is contrary to the principle of a universal PBS".

Meanwhile, the Department of Health has updated its site to include a full summary of changes in relation to the new Schedule of Pharmaceutical Benefits.

CLICK HERE to review.

Retail spend increase

POST Christmas Sales are on track to bring in \$16.8 billion in revenue to retailers between Boxing Day until January 16, with Victoria seeing the "lion's share" in shopping growth up 5.6% to \$4.2 billion, according to latest figures by Australian Retailers Association and Roy Morgan Research.

Herbalife appointment

HERBALIFE has appointed Doctor Francis Gregory Samonte to its nutrition advisory board, effective January 01.

Samonte is an expert in paediatric neurology and is based in Manila.

Win with Neat Feat



This week Pharmacy Daily and Neat Feat are giving away a prize pack each day including BodySaver and FaceSaver.

Leading personal care company, Neat Feat, has developed your sweating solution. Neat 3B BodySaver incorporates an antiperspirant in an emollient and a soothing cream to help combat sweat rash and chafing. Neat 3B FaceSaver is a soothing gel formulation that evaporates rapidly, leaving the active antiperspirant ingredient as a thin film with an antiperspirant effect that's long-lasting. Visit www.neatfeat.com

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

Who is BodySaver ideal for?

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, John Oakley from Norgine.

Free smart sugar app

TO COMBAT the rising epidemic of childhood obesity, English health officials have released a free app to help parents make informed decisions about food, by monitoring the sugar content of more than 75,000 popular food and drink products.

Unveiled as part of its Change4Life advertising campaign, the Smart Sugar App works by scanning barcodes and revealing the total sugar content in cubes or grams.



DISPENSARY CORNER

A MOTORIST in the United States has reversed her drink-driving charges, after being diagnosed with a rare medical condition that causes her body to literally turn food into alcohol.

Authorities pulled over the 35-year-old school teacher after she was seen driving erratically with a flat tyre.

Police say the woman was slurring her words and had bloodshot glassy eyes, later charging her with 'driving while impaired'.

The woman, who has not been named, admitted to having three alcoholic beverages, however her lawyer argued that she had "not consumed enough to end up with the 0.33% reading".

The judge dismissed her case, following a medical diagnosis of Auto Brewery Syndrome, a condition which renders the person unable to properly process carbohydrates, opting instead to convert it into ethanol.

