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Qld consult room call

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland branch has called upon pharmacies to face up to the challenge of the changing pharmacy landscape by pursuing “new ways of capturing value outside of the dispensary”.

Guild Queensland president Tim Logan said the local Pharmacy Business Support Team is encouraging members to establish a consult room within the pharmacy to provide GCPA funded services.

“The Federal Budget has recognised the vital role of community pharmacy in our health system, with a funded package of measures which will provide a revenue boost and professional opportunities for pharmacies,” Logan said.

“By converting an underutilised area of the pharmacy into a consult room, pharmacies could generate additional income through newly expanded GCPA programs, such as MedsChecks and Diabetes MedsChecks.”

Contact 07 3831 3788 for more.

Hijacked review misses

RIDDLED with problems of missed deadlines, hijacked agendas and conflicts of interest, the Interim Report of the Pharmacy Remuneration and Regulation Review is “fundamentally flawed and inherently damaging”, concludes the Pharmacy Guild of Australia in its submission to the Government.

The Guild highlighted that failing to identify “practical ways to build upon a community pharmacy model that works extremely well, enjoys the overwhelming support of the public and is fiscally sustainable” represents a “lost opportunity”.

Nevertheless, the Guild has also stated that it is “determined that this opportunity is not lost and is committed to working with government and all relevant stakeholders in ensuring that a viable community pharmacy network continues to deliver the best possible health outcomes for patients into the future.”

In addition, the emphasis ought to

be on “working in partnership with the profession and collaborating and integrating with the broader health sector” the Guild argued.

Principal points in the submission refer to ideological economic theorising hijacking the agenda of the Review in a way that would “dismantle if not destroy the tried and tested, mature community pharmacy model, forcing the closure of an estimated 1,700 community pharmacies with major losses of jobs, and an irreversible corporatisation and commoditisation of medicines related care.”

The Review’s approach to dispensing with its Efficient Long Run Incremental Cost (ELRIC) benchmarking metric is described as “unworkable in practice, unprecedented in the health sector, and completely lacking in terms of any cost benefit analysis”.

The flat dispensing fee at such a low level is inconsistent with the Review’s own admission that 15% of pharmacies are not even earning taxable profits.

Of major concern to the Guild are the dismantling of the location rules, including the supermarket options, and radical changes to the supply chain.

The other over-riding concern expressed by the Guild submission is the “serious conflict of interest” which saw the appointment of competition economist Professor Stephen King to head the Review, in spite of his “public statements” on location rules, and reference to Deloitte Access Economics reports.

CLICK HERE for the submission.

Biosimilars consult

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) is seeking input from interested stakeholders on proposed options around whether there is a need in Australia for additional naming requirements for biological medicines as a way of strengthening traceability and pharmacovigilance.

At present there is no easy way to distinguish between originator and biosimilar products even though the products are not identical in every way, as in the case of small molecule drugs and their generics.

This makes it impossible to track adverse events with either originator or biosimilar product making it equally impossible to manage switching patients.

There is no internationally agreed naming convention for biosimilars, prompting the TGA to consult on the matter - consultation closes 08 Sep 17 - visit tga.gov.au to submit.



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Alexion income up 21%

GLOBAL biopharmaceutical company Alexion, which specialises in life-threatening diseases with little or no effective treatments, has announced 2Q17 total revenues of US\$912 million, 21% up over 2Q16, in its NASDAQ report to shareholders.

The company said it was increasing 2017 revenue guidance to \$3.450 - \$3.525 billion.

The negative impact of foreign currency on total revenue year-over-year was 2% or \$12 million, net of hedging activities.

Diluted earnings per share (EPS) in the quarter was \$0.73 per share, compared to \$0.53 per share in the second quarter of 2016.

Soliris (eculizumab), Strensiq (asfotase alfa) and Kanuma (sebelipase alfa) drove the impressive business growth.

Go to news.alexionpharma.com.

WIN WITH GAIA

This week Pharmacy Daily and GAIA are giving away each day a "nappy suite" prize pack including Soothing Cream, 100g Powder, 80 pack of wipes and two 20 packs of wipes.

GAIA's Natural Baby Soothing Cream slips easily into your bag, making it your nappy change essential from the leading Australian brand of natural baby skincare. Containing beeswax, zinc, castor oil and marshmallow along with all the usual GAIA goodies, this Soothing Cream is the perfect companion to soothe and protect skin. **CLICK HERE** to find out more.

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

What benefits are there for Mum and Dad to use GAIA Soothing Cream?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Michelle Hyatt from Alphapharm.

Aboriginal health group

THE PSA has launched a Special Interest Group (SIG) in recognition of the growing number of pharmacists working in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), aiming to provide support for the specific needs and skills needed in this area.

PSA national president Dr Shane Jackson said having a SIG would give pharmacists in ACCHOs assistance in their career growth.

"In many cases pharmacists working in these positions are providing innovative and diverse services that have the potential to be informative and relevant to the evolution of pharmacy services and inter-professional care," he said.

"Consultation with these pharmacists and services about their needs is vital to ensure PSA and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) deliver relevant and meaningful benefits to PSA members and the wider pharmacy and health sectors."

The National ACHO SIG Committee will be jointly run by PSA and NACCHO and will aim to foster collaboration, inform relevant policy and strengthen the relationships between the organisations "with a shared commitment to embedding pharmacists in ACCHOs nationally".

A key role of the committee will be providing up-to-date information to NACCHO and

Opdivo broad funding

BRISTOL-MYERS Squibb has announced that Opdivo (nivolumab) will be listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) from 1st August for locally advanced or metastatic non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and advanced (stage IV) clear cell variant renal cell carcinoma (RCC).

Certain conditions apply to the listings of this expensive therapy.

In Australia, lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths claiming 8,000 victims each year, while 3,500 new cases of kidney cancer are diagnosed every year.

CLICK HERE for the Opdivo PI.

PSA on issues that relate to both organisations, including input on improvements to PSA's professional development and practice support programs.

The PSA also welcomed the announcement of a trial to assist Aboriginal health organisations to integrate pharmacists into their services.

Jackson said having a culturally responsive pharmacist integrated within Aboriginal health services would build better relationships and improve results in chronic disease management and Quality Use of Medicines.

Quit programs call

SMOKING prevalence is high among methadone maintenance drug users, say the authors of a study of the matter publishing in *BMJ Open*.

Researchers said that enhanced smoking cessation support should be integrated into methadone maintenance treatment (MMT) programs in order to reduce risk factors for cigarette smoking and improve the health and well-being of people recovering from opiate dependence.



The largely Vietnamese research examined 1,016 drug users undergoing MMT to reach their conclusion - **CLICK HERE**.

Homeopathy slammed

NHS England has published detailed plans, drawn up with family doctors and pharmacists, to cut out prescriptions for ineffective, over-priced and low value treatments.

Aiming to trim hundreds of millions from the nation's rapidly growing drugs bill, the NHS said this would create headroom to reinvest all savings in newer and more effective medicines and treatments.

A formal public consultation is being launched on new national guidelines which state that 18 treatments, including homeopathy and herbal treatments which together cost taxpayers £141m a year, should generally not be prescribed.

NHS England's chief executive Simon Stevens described homeopathy as "at best a placebo and a misuse of scarce NHS funds".

In addition the consultation also covers a further 3,200 prescription items, many of which are readily available and sold 'over the counter' in pharmacies, supermarkets, petrol stations, corner shops and other retailers, often at a significantly lower price than the cost to the NHS.

Also under fire are products for "minor self-limiting conditions" such as cough mixture and cold treatments, eye drops, laxatives and sun cream lotions, which currently cost £50-100m a year.

Stevens said, "The public rightly expects that the NHS will use every pound wisely, and today we're taking practical action to free up funding to better spend on modern drugs and treatments."

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Dispensary Corner

AN OHIO defense lawyer is accusing one or more jurors of stealing 71 oxycodone pills that were discovered missing after a drug-possession trial ended last week in a county court.

John David Moore Jr said his client should get a new trial, or a dismissal of the charges, because the disappearance of the drugs has tainted the jury's verdict.

Prosecutor Ron O'Brien said it was premature to blame jurors for the apparent theft of the drugs, which was being investigated by the county sheriff's office.

The incident did not warrant a new trial or any modification in the case, he said.

FOR coffee loving folks out there, a study has found that caffeine is harmless to your health.

A review of 44 trials dispelled the widespread myth that caffeine, found in tea, coffee and soft drinks, is bad for the body.

It highlighted that by sticking to the recommended daily amount of 400mg set by the European Union health officials - equivalent four cups of coffee or eight cups of tea - has no lasting damage on the body.

Research was conducted by a leading British dietitian.

The paper also shows caffeine boosts both mental and physical performance by drinking coffee.



QUM labelling changes

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has announced improvements to medicines labelling in Australia, developing resources to support health professionals in their communications with patients.

The intention of the TGA is to help bring Australian medicine labels up to date and align them with international best practice.

"They will help Australians to make more informed choices about their medicines and to use them more safely."

The TGA said it had developed posters targeted at healthcare professionals and consumers and these would be gradually released over the four-year transition period allowing sponsors to comply.

Downloadable documents graphically explain the structure of the new labels (**pictured**).

The labelling will be in a consistent format with medicine



information such as active ingredients, uses, warnings, directs for use and other information. The new requirement is that the active ingredient name (generic name) will be in larger font than on previous renderings, and over the

four-year transition period, more allergens will appear or prompt the consumer to reference the 'Consumer Medicines Information' on the pack.

The downloadable posters alert consumers to "Ask your pharmacist or doctor if you have any questions."

G&M Integra deal

ORGANIC skincare company G&M Cosmetics has announced a distribution agreement with natural medicine company Integra Healthcare.

The arrangement is effective today 01 Aug 17 and encompasses all pharmacies and chemists, both group and independent customers across Australia and New Zealand.

Integra will promote G&M products and collect and process pharmacy sales orders, including delivery, the cosmetics company said.

Products affected include Australian Creams, Australian Creams MKII and the Dr.V Pharma Range body washes and lotions.

For order forms ph: 1300 654 336.



OCD study recruit call

CURTIN University researchers have announced they are seeking to recruit parents of children with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) to take part in a new study.

The study aims to better understand what it is like to care for a child with OCD to help inform the development of a support program for parents.

Anyone interested in taking part in the study can contact angelica.marquesp@postgrad.curtin.edu.au for more information.

Guild Update

Going digital

THE Pharmacy Guild and the Australian Digital Health Agency have joined forces to help community pharmacies become leaders in digital health.

The Guild and the Agency have committed to work together to help build pharmacy digital health capabilities and advance the efficiency, quality and delivery of healthcare. They have entered into a collaborative partnership to drive adoption and use of the My Health Record system by community pharmacies (supported by education and training) and maximise its medicines safety benefits.

Specifically, the two organisations will work to optimise connectivity to the My Health Record system through dedicated community pharmacy support including continuing professional development and pursuing meaningful use facilitators in areas such as shared care planning, transitional care, telehealth and interoperability with pharmacy clinical service IT platforms. Guild Executive Director, David Quilty, said the Guild welcomed the collaboration with the Agency as a step towards optimised integration of community pharmacies in the My Health Record system. "Community pharmacists have long been early adopters and innovators in digital health, and this will spur the sector on to make an even bigger contribution," Mr Quilty said.