

Chemists' Own expands products

ARROW Pharmaceuticals brand Chemists' Own has launched five new products into the market, as part of an ongoing range expansion which will see it debut at least 16 items in the next nine months.

The additions include povidone-iodine products such as Antiseptic Concentrated Gargle, Antiseptic Solution and Antiseptic Ointment; Ibuprofen Liquid Capsules; and Procalm Tablets (prochlorperazine maleate 5mg) for the treatment of nausea associated with migraines.

The range expansion is being accompanied with a packaging makeover to lift consumer appeal.

PBAC additions

HEALTH Minister Greg Hunt has announced the appointment of Jo Watson as the inaugural deputy chairperson of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee.

Watson is deputy chair of the Consumers Health Forum and has been on the PBAC since 2012.

She is also one of the three members of the panel for the controversial Review of Pharmacy Remuneration and Regulation.

Hunt also announced the appointment of two additional members to the PBAC - specialist endocrinologist Dr (Peter) Shane Hamblin and haematologist Professor Phoebe Joy Ho.

The additions raise the PBAC's membership to its full capacity of 21 members, "enhancing its ability to address the growing number of increasingly complex submissions".

Cut medicine harm - WHO

THE World Health Organization (WHO) has issued a challenge to governments across the globe, urging them to reduce the burden of medication-related harm by 50% within the next five years.

Key areas of focus identified include polypharmacy and transitions of care, while the WHO

NT AMA warns of codeine pressure

THE president of the Australian Medical Association in the Northern Territory, Rob Parker, has raised concerns about additional pressure on GP resources due to the planned rescheduling of codeine medications on 01 Feb.

According to a report in the *NT News* today, Parker said GPs were concerned that patients would harass them to obtain codeine, or try to get it through other ways which could put increased pressure on general practitioners.

New role for Roxon

FORMER Health Minister Nicola Roxon has been appointed to the board of Dexus Funds Management, which is making a push into property associated with healthcare operations.

Roxon resigned from parliament in 2013 citing family reasons.

Dexus recently established The Australian Healthcare Property Fund with developer Commercial & General, which is currently developing a hospital in Adelaide.

Clinical Excellence Commission has coined a new acronym summarising high risk medications: A PINCH.

This is explained as **Anti**-infective agents; **P**otassium and other electrolytes; **I**nsulin; **N**arcotics and other sedatives; **C**hemotherapeutic and immunosuppressive agents and **H**eparin and anticoagulants.

The *Medication without harm* initiative commits WHO to using its convening and coordinating powers to drive forward global actions on medication safety, and will require politicians and health care leaders to prioritise safer use of medicines.

WHO said measures to reduce this harm would include educating and empowering patients and carers; developing tools to assist frontline health care professionals; and "engineering new systems of care to create resilience against the factors that predispose to the risk of medication errors" - see who.int.

FDA likes hep C Rx

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) last week approved Mavyret (glecaprevir and pibrentasvir) to treat adults with chronic hepatitis C virus (HCV) genotypes 1-6 without cirrhosis (liver disease) or with mild cirrhosis, as well as other patients under certain conditions.

Mavyret is the first treatment of eight weeks duration approved for all HCV genotypes 1-6 in adult patients without cirrhosis who have not been previously treated.

Standard treatment length was previously 12 weeks or more.

STEEP impact

A **MONASH** University study has found five dominant factors influencing pharmacists' capacity to implement patient-focused models of professional practice: Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental or Political (STEEP).

These five most widely acknowledged domains were explained as: **Social**: the education of pharmacists, their beliefs and the capacity of the pharmacist workforce; **Technological**: current and future practice models, technology and workplace structures; **Economic**: funding of services, the viability of practice and operation of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme; **Environmental**: attitudes and expectations of stakeholders, including consumers, health system reform and external competition; and **Political**: regulation of practice, representation of the profession and policies affecting practice.

Authors concluded that the results demonstrate the need for a multifactorial approach to the implementation of professional models of practice in this setting.

Visit publish.csiro.au for the study.

Strip-a-script

AN ELDERLY pharmacist practising in New York faces criminal charges after police allege that he forced a woman to remove her clothes in front of him before he would fill her prescription, according to a report from the *Niagara Gazette*.

Robert Kenzia, 81, was charged with coercion, a misdemeanor under New York state law.



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Dispensary Corner

A CASUAL and curious Koala was caught on *9NEWS* video ambling into his local pharmacy last Friday afternoon in the New South Wales-Victoria border town of Tocumwal.

Posted on the pharmacy Facebook page, the marsupial meandering managed a mammoth response rate with quips such as, “now where do they hide that eucalyptus oil?” “Forgot my Amcal card!” “Eucalyptus throat lozenges please?”

On a more serious note, one observer said the occasion speaks to the loss of local habitat.

In any case, Tocumwal Pharmacy felt it was a furry friendly visit.



A RESTAURANT in China’s Hangzhou City is under fire after it began offering discounts to women based on their bra size.

Posters for the Trendy Shrimp eatery (pictured) provided a graphic display of the pricing scheme, under the not-so-catchy slogan of ‘The whole city is looking for BREASTS’.

Under the scheme smaller females start with a 5% discount, while those with a G cup can save up to 65%, the *BBC* reports.



CMs dominate submissions

IF IT were purely down to word count on objections to the Professor Stephen King review of Pharmacy Remuneration and Regulation, Complementary medicines (CMs) issues, including homeopathy, appear to dominate.

Homeopathy products get a lot of airplay in some submissions to the King Review, especially from the input by Complementary Medicines Australia (CMA) and predictably from a number of homeopathy lobby and “research” groups.

Equally predictably, the proposal to remove homeopathy products from PBS dispensing pharmacies gains support from public health advocate Monash’s Ken Harvey.

Others such as Blackmores, and the Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) focus on the vexed question of the removal of certain CMs from “behind the counter” status, an implied indication of increased efficacy.

Blackmores have a full range of “Bioceuticals” ‘Practitioner-Only’ products which are “stored ‘behind the counter’ to ensure that consumers take practitioner advice on their health management and

appropriate product usage”.

“The option of removing access to ‘behind the counter’ storage is not supported by any evidence that there is a problem requiring correction,” Blackmores said.

MEANWHILE in other areas, the Generic and Biosimilars Medicines Association (GBMA) argued economics against the option that “suppliers of PBS-listed medicines be obliged to ensure delivery to any community pharmacy in Australia”.

“Placing the onus for distribution on suppliers of generic medicines will only add to the cost of doing business,” GBMA said.

The Consumers Health Forum backed the option of 24-hour online access and dispensing machines with a hotline to a pharmacist, while debating strongly across other proposal elements.

Pharmaceutical industry peak body Medicines Australia chose not to respond to all the options presented, “because we are not convinced that a case for broad ranging and radical reform has been made”, arguing that the system is not broken, but could always do with some fine-tuning.

API laser confirmation

AUSTRALIAN Pharmaceutical Industries has confirmed it is participating in a sale process for Laser Clinics Australia, in response to media speculation about a possible acquisition (*PD* yesterday).

The company said it had previously informed shareholders it was actively looking at a range of potential growth options to complement its existing business, and continued to evaluate various opportunities from time to time.

While API is taking part in the Laser Clinics process, it has “made no decision nor has it entered into any agreement with respect to the potential acquisition,” the firm said.

Guild Update

The codeine change is coming

THE Guild has developed a number of public resources to assist pharmacy staff in the lead-up to the 1 February 2018 changes to codeine.

Support materials include:

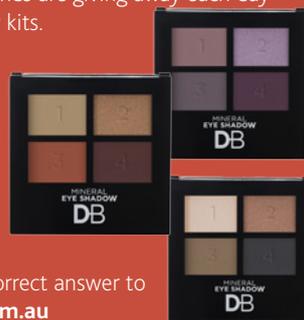
- ‘Changes to medicines containing codeine – what pharmacists need to know’ which pharmacists can use in discussions with patients and their carers
 - A checklist to prepare pharmacies for the transition to up scheduling
 - A flyer to talk about pain management with patients
- Template letters to use in discussions with local health providers

Visit www.guild.org.au to access these free resources.

WIN WITH DESIGNER BRANDS

This week *Pharmacy Daily* and Designer Brands are giving away each day three of their DB Quad Mineral Eye Shadow kits.

These eye shadow quads are perfect for creating smokey, multi-faceted looks. Each palette includes intense mineral pigments and a super-blendable formula in four complementary shades. 100% certified cruelty free and vegan. **CLICK HERE** to find out more.



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

How many individual shades are in each Designer Brands Quad Mineral Eye Shadow kit?

Congratulations to yesterday’s winner, Sharon Murphy from Corporate Financial Services.