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New trials revealed

HEALTH Minister Greg Hunt has confirmed the latest additions to the Pharmacy Trial Program, for which \$50 million was provided under the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

New trials included a **Pharmacy Asthma Service**, which will target patients with poorly controlled asthma with the aim of addressing “fundamental issues associated with medication use”.

The asthma trial is being led by the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research in collaboration with the Pharmacy Guild and other partners.

Also new is the **Pharmacists in Aboriginal Health Services** trial which will see a pharmacist working directly as part of a primary care team within an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) to overcome barriers that patients may face in accessing medicines.

Health minister Greg Hunt announced the new trials at PSA17, with the Pharmaceutical Society saying there is growing evidence pharmacists employed by ACCHOs can “assist to increase the life expectancy and improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients” - in particular by reducing blood pressure and cholesterol as well as improved diabetes control.

The previously announced **Indigenous Medicines Review Service** will also commence shortly, with the aim of improving medication management for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders through pharmacist advice and culturally appropriate services.

Pharmacy languishing - PSA

PSA president Shane Jackson has revealed a proposal to undertake a large scale consultation to develop a 10-year Action Plan for pharmacist services in Australia.

Speaking at the opening of the PSA17 conference in Sydney on Fri, Jackson said professional pharmacy services in Australia were lagging behind other countries.

“We used to lead the world in pharmacists’ professional services, but not any more...I want to see that rectified,” he said.

Jackson said the 10-year plan would involve PSA leading a comprehensive consultation process including consumers, policy makers, government, pharmacists and other health professional groups, to help map out the future of pharmacists’ care in this country.

He said a strategic approach to the role of pharmacist services in the community, how they are funded and how they are delivered, was urgently required.

“Healthcare is changing and we can no longer see pharmacist services delivered in primary care as being only available through a community pharmacy.

“This stifles innovation within our profession, and more importantly consumer access to pharmacist services and quality use of medicines,” Jackson said.

He said limiting pharmacist services in the community to funding from the PBS contributed to Australia’s pharmacists being underutilised in roles across the broader health system.

“We will likely end up with a very

different Agreement for pharmacist services in the future...one in which services form a continuum from dispensing through to comprehensive medication review - delivered in an individualised manner based on patient need and focused on the quality use of medicines,” Jackson said.

He urged the removal of “arbitrary provider caps” on clinical services for medication reviews.

“These are important programs that must have sufficient investment,” he said.

MEANWHILE Jackson also slammed the “apallingly low wages” for pharmacists, with the 10-year plan aiming to rectify this through new roles and new remuneration for the sector.

Key opportunities include work within Primary Health Networks which have already been trialled, but need to be scaled up.

PSA urges CPA role

PSA national president Shane Jackson says as the National Peak Body for pharmacists in Australia, the Pharmaceutical Society should have a clear role in future Pharmacy Agreements.

“We believe PSA being a co-signatory to the Pharmacy Agreement will bring better outcomes for pharmacists, the profession and ensure delivery of programs and services are focused on health outcomes,” he told delegates at the PSA17 conference in Sydney on Fri.

“We look forward to progressing our involvement,” he added.

Ice death toll doubles

THE yearly death toll linked to methamphetamine (ice) use in Australia doubled between 2009 and 2015, according to new Australian research from the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (NDARC) released today.

The study, published in the journal *Addiction*, analysed 1,649 meth-related deaths and found that overdose was the most common cause of death at 43% followed by ‘natural’ diseases such as heart disease at 22% and suicide at 18%.

Lead author Professor Shane Darke said these results were indicative of a major public health issue, with almost half of cases in rural and regional locations.

“To see such large and significant increases in mortality rates over the study period indicates a major methamphetamine problem,” Darke added.

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Hunt funds national ERRCD

HEALTH Minister Greg Hunt opened the PSA17 conference in Sydney last Fri just after unveiling a \$16 million plan to deliver the national roll-out of real-time prescription monitoring for medicines, to “directly address the needless loss of life from misuse of these drugs” (**PD** breaking news).

The national Real Time Prescription Monitoring scheme will provide an instant alert to pharmacists and doctors if patients

receive multiple supplies of prescription-only medicines.

Hunt said the system would save lives and protect the community, adding “this is something of absolute national importance”.

“Real time reporting will assist doctors and pharmacists to identify patients who are at risk of harm due to dependency, misuse or abuse of controlled medicines, and patients who are diverting these medicines,” he said.

The Pharmacy Guild welcomed the announcement, saying it believed real time recording was a vital clinical tool which will enable both doctors and pharmacists to identify and support patients with prescription drug addiction issues.

“For too long doctors and pharmacists have been expected to work at the front line tackling the prescription drug dependence issue without the full knowledge that real time recording can provide.

“The technology exists - it’s great that there is now real political momentum to see it implemented,” Tambassis said.

The Federal Government first funded the development of the Electronic Reporting and Recording of Controlled Drugs (ERRCD) system to help state and territory governments manage controlled medicines in 2013, committing \$5 million under the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

The Guild has frequently made the development and implementation of ERRCD a theme through its many government submissions including that to the recent TGA consultation around the up-scheduling of pain relief medicines containing codeine.

Qld also last week committed to developing a business case for the system (**PD** 27 Jul).

PSA honours pharmacy excellence



LAST weekend’s PSA17 conference in Sydney saw the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia name the winners of its 2017 Excellence Awards, with national president Shane Jackson saying the accolades “applaud individuals at the apex of our profession’s achievements”.

Ervine Newton OAM FPS from Kensington in Melbourne was named the 2017 Pharmacist of the Year, highlighted for his life-long contribution to pharmacy which had “led to extensive changes in pharmacy practice and improved the health and wellbeing of hundreds of thousands of people and their carers,” Jackson said.

Newton has also played key roles within the PSA, being a Victorian Branch councillor for many years and Branch president from 1997 through to 1999.

The Early Career Pharmacist of the Year category was awarded to ACT-based Elise Apolloni, who is a community pharmacist, pharmacy owner, asthma educator and mental health first aid instructor.

Apolloni was the first ACT-based Credentialed Diabetes Educator and has been an active member of the PSA Early Career Pharmacist

group since 2008 and a PSA branch committee member since 2013.

The third major award went to John Bell AM - also known as “the friendly pharmacist” - who was given the Lifetime Achievement Award for his long-time contribution to pharmacy in academia, the community, industry and pharmacy.

Bell has been a practising pharmacist for over half a century, and continues to own a pharmacy along with his other wide-ranging commitments to the profession.

Other accolades he has received include being made a member of the Order of Australia in 1993 as well as the International Pharmaceutical Federation’s Andre Bedat Award for services to international pharmacy practice.

Each of the winners receives a Symbion Education Grant worth \$9,000, with Symbion executive gm Pharmacy Brett Barons congratulating all the winners.

Symbion has sponsored the PSA Excellence Awards for the last 13 years.

Barons is **pictured** above with, from left: John Bell, Elise Apolloni, Irvine Newton and PSA national president Shane Jackson.

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 NSW or ACT to send the correct answer to the question to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

How many nappy changes on average do you do with a baby?

Check here tomorrow for today’s winner.

Dispensary Corner

LET'S hope it is good for the complexion.

There's a massive row brewing in New Zealand, after \$90,000 of taxpayer funds was spent importing mud from South Korea.

The organisers of the upcoming Mudtopia festival in Rotorua brought in five tonnes of mud powder from Boryeong, in the hope that the event would significantly boost tourism.

"I know there's a perception that Rotorua has enough mud," said local councillor Trevor Maxwell.

"But you can't just pull any old mud out of the ground and throw it at people. There could be anything in there that could end up making people sick" he said.

Boryeong hosts an annual 10-day celebration of mud (pictured below) which last year attracted about 400,000 foreign visitors - and Rotorua hopes to emulate that success.

Organisers insist the cost of the imported Korean mud will be eventually covered by ticket sales.

The Boryeong product "will give Mudtopia visitors a different type of mud for a hands-on experience," they added.

The importation has met with a predictable chorus of derision from visionless naysayers, with Matthew Rhodes from the NZ Taxpayers' Union likening the move to "Dubai importing sand for a desert festival".



\$50k prize up for grabs

ASTELLAS Pharma Australia has announced the launch of the second year of the Astellas C³ Prize, a global challenge designed to change cancer care with a total of \$100,000 in prizes available.

Open to anyone with an interest in the field, including pharmacists, entries will be accepted until 21 Aug and five finalists will be selected to pitch their ideas live at the Union for International Cancer Control World Cancer Leaders' Summit on 13 Nov in Mexico City.

One grant winner will be awarded US\$50,000 along with other tangible benefits and opportunities to expand and implement their creation - while four runners-up each receive prizes of US\$12,500.

For more details of the scheme visit c3prize.com.

Dragon's Blood infusion

AUSTRALIAN-OWNED cosmetics, skincare and personal care leader Heat Doward has announced its move to bring Skin Physics' top-selling Dragon's Blood cosmeceuticals to its extensive pharmacy network.

Previously only available in Priceline and online, the new deal will see Heat Doward deliver 15 award-winning Skin Physics SKUs to the group's 4,000 pharmacy customers across the country.

Launched in 2007, Skin Physics took on the anti-ageing sector with a range of plant stem cell skincare and an extensive clinical study in Phototherapy and Retinol.

The brand's SUPERLIFT Neck Lifting & Firming Cream is the



best-selling neck cream in Priceline and the innovative Dragon's Blood range was the best-selling day and night cream in 2016, according to Beautyheaven, and has sold more than 500,000 units.

Pictured are Heat Doward md Gillian Franklin and Bio Physics Australia director Craig Schweighoffer sealing the deal.

Hep C drug funded

THE Federal Government has announced PBS funding for another hepatitis C medication, with Eplclusa to be added to the scheme effective from 01 Aug.

Aplclusa is the first of the new direct acting antivirals that can be used to treat people with any genotype of the ailment, making it simpler for doctors to prescribe and likely to boost uptake rates, particularly for rural and regional patients.

Health Minister Greg Hunt said 800 Australians died from hepatitis C each year, "and our investment in this drug is aimed at reversing this unacceptable statistic".

He said the government had allocated more than \$1 billion to fund the new hepatitis C medicines over the next five years, and since the first of the drugs became available in Mar 2016 over 42,000 people had received a PBS-subsidised medicine to treat the disease.

Hepatitis B is also being targeted, with vaccination of all infants through the National Immunisation Program and free catch-up vaccines for 10-19 year olds from 01 Jul 2017.



Welcome to PD's weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is Toni Riley, Community Pharmacist and Project Manager of National Return of Unwanted Medicines.



Why are unwanted drugs not donated to developing countries?

ALTHOUGH sending unwanted medicines to developing countries or countries experiencing disaster situations is often thought to be a useful way of providing much needed supplies, unfortunately not all medicine donations are helpful, and inappropriate medicine donations can be dangerous or useless. In these situations, medicine donations become a source of further problems to the country involved.

In Guatemala in 1976, 7,000 cartons of mixed medicines were donated. It took almost 6 months to sort these drugs and only 10% of the medicines sent were actually relevant to the health needs in Guatemala and adequately labelled. This is one of many examples which lead to the World Health Organisation developing guideline to assist other countries in developing their own policies.

Australian Guidelines have been developed to guide any donations overseas to ensure the appropriate, good quality and essential medicines can be made available in times of need. If medicines are to be donated, the country seeking the donation must officially request specific medicines before they can be sent.

If the quality of a medicine is not suitable for use in Australia, it is not suitable for donation to an overseas country. For more information about Return Unwanted Medicines visit www.returnmed.com.au.