

Remote dispensing

MACHINE dispensing is a key option canvassed in the King Review of Pharmacy Remuneration and Regulation Interim Report, referencing the trialling of the concept in the UK and its use giving broader access in rural and remote regions of Canada.

Patients put their script into the machine which is linked via video to a remote pharmacist, who is able to dispense a limited range of medications via the device.

"Results from these trials have shown that these machines are a viable alternative to conventional pharmacies," the report states.

The recommendation is that the government should trial the use of machine dispensing "in a small number of relevant secure locations in communities that are not currently adequately served by community pharmacy".

Friendlies vaccination surge

WESTERN Australia's Friendlies Pharmacy Group has this week achieved more than 22,000 flu vaccinations for the season, eclipsing last year's campaign by 27% to date.

Friendlies head Wayne Stone said the significant increase in pharmacy vaccinations was growing testament that the public "are now more than ever open to seeing properly equipped pharmacies and trained pharmacists as a viable alternative to other traditional healthcare providers".

The immunisations were delivered through just 27 pharmacies - an average of more than 800 per store - with the group saying the strong demand "cemented its place as the health care destination pharmacy group of choice in WA".

The Friendlies group is supported by its master franchisor HBF Health, one of Australia's largest health

insurance providers.

The unique relationship sees a growing suite of health services and exclusive benefits offered to HBF members, and has seen the Friendlies network almost double in size since 2015.

Stone said given the strong uptake and acceptance of pharmacy vaccinations, he hoped it would only be a matter of time before WA followed the leads of other jurisdictions and expanded the range of immunisations that pharmacists could legally deliver. "Doing so will not only increase consumer choice but properly applied, has the potential also to reduce government spend," he said.

New UK minister

STEVE Brine has been appointed as the new UK Pharmacy Minister, replacing David Mowat who lost his seat in the British general election earlier this month.

Brine has been a member of parliament since 2010, and in May 2015 was appointed as parliamentary private secretary to UK Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt.

Antibiotic stewardship

ANTIBIOTIC stewardship programmes have been shown in a large meta-analysis to significantly reduce the incidence of infections and colonisation with antibiotic-resistant bacteria and *clostridium difficile* infections in hospital inpatients.

The antimicrobial stewardship team includes a pharmacist both trained in antimicrobial stewardship and allocated time and resources for these activities.

Authors concluded the results "provide stakeholders and policy makers with evidence for implementation of antibiotic stewardship interventions to reduce the burden of infections from antibiotic-resistant bacteria."

See the study in thelancet.com.

Pharmacy satisfaction

MY CHEMIST has topped the May monthly rankings in the Roy Morgan Research customer satisfaction awards for pharmacy.

Terry White came in second place, followed by Priceline Pharmacy, Chemmart Pharmacy and then Chemist Warehouse in fifth spot.

The results are based on a moving sample of 8,835 consumers polled between Jun 2016 and May 2017.

NZ bulk distribution

NEW Zealand's PHARMAC has confirmed it will proceed with an agreement with EBOS offshoot Onelink for the bulk distribution and logistics services for publicly funded condoms and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) pharmaceuticals to community health organisations.

The proposal was the subject of a recent consultation, which saw the NZ Guild come up with an alternative solution based around distribution through community pharmacies (PD 26 May).

However PHARMAC says using Onelink is "preferable to a distributed supply network (e.g. pharmacies) for the volume of product that is distributed to these organisations".

Insomnia course

GUILD Learning & Development is partnering with MSD with the creation of a new online course titled *Belsomra (suvorexant): A different way to manage insomnia*.

The course covers key safety and counselling considerations and is accredited for 0.75 hours of Group 1 CPD - see www.mycpd.org.au.

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Dispensary Corner

HOW to skirt the rules - around 30 schoolboys at Isca Academy in the southwestern English city of Exeter turned up at school wearing the girls' uniform of short-sleeved white shirts, school ties plus gray & white plaid skirts in an effort to keep cool.

Britain's 30°C 'heatwave' (which would hardly rate a weather mention in Australia), drove the boys to this desperate behaviour because shorts are not allowed at the school.

According to *Yahoo! News*, in the western French city of Nantes, male bus drivers reportedly also wore skirts this week to protest the ruling that they were not allowed to wear shorts.



AN AUCKLAND-BASED drug-fiend dog has earned the dubious honour being the "strangest claim" for Southern Cross Pet Insurance over the last year, after overdosing (twice) on over-the-counter medications.

The cocker spaniel-poodle cross ended up at the vet after scoffing a packet of Sudafed - then after recovering five days later (at a cost of NZ\$585) was back again with an ibuprofen overdose.

Another case reported by the insurer saw a miniature schnauzer hospitalised with "raisin toxicity" after winning a battle with another dog for a packet of hot cross buns - costing the company more than \$1,000.

Digital ad spending climbs

PHARMACEUTICAL marketers in Australia are increasingly utilising online channels to promote their products, with new data collated by advertising analytics firm Standard Media Index indicating a shift in spending from content sites into social media and "programmatic" online advertising.

The figures reveal a hefty 31.7% year-on-year increase in digital media costs in the first quarter of 2017 to \$5.6 million, representing 16% of the estimated \$34.9 million spent in total by pharmaceutical marketers during the period.

Pharmaceuticals now comprise

the 18th largest category measured by Standard Media Index, which collates actual advertising payments from major media buyers.

The company claims its unique data enables marketers to determine whether they are under- or over-investing in the various channels versus their peers.

During Q1 2017 pharmaceutical advertisers grew search spending by 46.3% and programmatic services by 91.7% - while the biggest increase came in social media which was up 168%.

Standard Media Index Australia/NZ managing director Jane Schulze said the data showed pharma companies were increasingly embracing digital channels.

She said shifting away from content sites indicated companies saw digital as a "strong option for many consumers when they are researching and purchasing brands".

Categories analysed include analgesics, brand/sponsorship, skin/respiratory, supplement/vitamins and "other pharmaceutical products".

New priority pathway

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has confirmed the implementation of a Priority Review pathway for the registration of novel prescription medicines for Australian patients, with a target timeframe for assessment of 150 days - up to 30 days shorter than standard registration processes.

Details now at www.tga.gov.au.

Win with dreambaby

This week Pharmacy Daily and Dreambaby® are giving readers the chance to win each day a Multi-Stage Potty Seat, 2-Up Step Stool and Watch-Your-Step® Anti-Slip Bath Mat.

Dreambaby's Multi-Stage Potty Seat makes toilet training easier for both parents and children. It can be used as a free-standing potty or to fit with your existing toilet. The Dreambaby® 2-Up Step Stool, is a great help with toilet training, brushing teeth or simply looking in the mirror! The Dreambaby® Watch-Your-Step® Anti-Slip Bath Mat has a "Too Hot" Indicator and, with its textured surface, is designed to place on the floor of your bath to ensure a safe and secure bathtub environment.

For more visit www.dreambaby.com.au.

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

What does the Dreambaby® 2-Up Step Stool help with?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Simone Barrance from Caruso's Natural Health.



Statin nocebo effect

RESEARCHERS have warned that many presumed statin-associated muscle pains may be the result of the "nocebo effect" under which patients experience adverse side effects unrelated to the specific pharmacological action of the drug - see thelancet.com.

Guild Update

Guild digest available now for Members

THE release of the 2017 Guild Digest has shown the impact of the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement on the operating landscape of community pharmacy.

The 2017 Digest, the 45th edition, presents a snapshot of pharmacy operations in Australia for the financial year 2015-16, based on a sample of 321 pharmacies.

2015-16 has been a transition year in the financial performance of community pharmacies - structural changes such as the introduction of the Administration, Handling & Infrastructure (AHI) Fee have helped stabilise official remuneration, but pressure from savings measures has resulted in actual remuneration negatively impacted.

This is reflected in some of the key results in the Digest, including reductions to net profit of 8% in 2015-16 when compared to the previous year.

The Digest also reveals that around 16% of pharmacies are located in rural areas, and there was one pharmacy for every 4,318 Australians.

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