

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news plus a full page from Guardian.

Members hail Sigma

THE recent Sigma Conference, which took place on the Gold Coast in the lead-up to APP last week, was well received by delegates from both Amcal and Guardian branded pharmacies.

Lilijana Cosic, from Corrimal Court Guardian in NSW, named 2017 Guardian Pharmacy of the Year, said the event consolidated what the pharmacy had been building on for the last five years.

"We've done the pilots, and we now have the tools with our Professional Services and our Leapp program," she said, adding that the new market positioning enabled the pharmacy to show customers "exactly who we want to be.

"We can't only survive in our future market, but we can own it," she said.

Ralph Kaiko from Amcal Max in Salamander Bay NSW described the conference as a marathon that the Sigma team finished in first place.

"Congratulations to Mark Hooper and the whole Sigma team," he said. See **page 4** for more from Sigma.

Guild urges Hunt to act

PHARMACY Guild executive director David Quilty has asked federal health minister Greg Hunt to follow up his positive speech at APP last week (**PD** 10 Mar) with urgent action.

Writing in the Guild's *Forefront* update yesterday, Quilty said: "What absolutely distinguished Minister Hunt's speech was his genuine empathy for community pharmacies as small businesses and for pharmacists as health practitioners".

He noted the minister's emphasis on improving outcomes through a stronger focus on preventative and mental health (with pharmacies an active participant in these pillars of his broader health policy agenda) plus a commitment to the development of pharmacy plan.

Quilty said such a plan was long overdue to provide clarity and certainty for community pharmacies, covering the risk-share agreement, location rules, access to community pharmacy programs and primary health care integration.

He said the Guild's national president George Tambassis and the pharmacy viability team were working closely and constructively with Minister Hunt and his staff.

With price disclosure, script volume shortfalls, the 6CPA risk share issue and the high cost of handling hepatitis C drugs, "our sector is at a tipping point," Quilty concluded, saying community pharmacy owners were looking to the minister to urgently deliver on these critical issues.

FDA Keytruda tick

THE US Food and Drug Administration has granted accelerated approval for Keytruda (pembrolizumab) for the treatment of adult and paediatric patients with refractory classical Hodgkin lymphoma, or those who have relapsed after three or more prior lines of therapy.

ATO boost for Avita

WOUND treatment specialist firm Avita Medical has hailed the receipt of a Research & Development Tax Incentive rebate from the Australian Taxation Office worth almost \$1 million.

The money delivers an "important additional resource" to help Avita commercialise its ReCell skin and wound repair platform.

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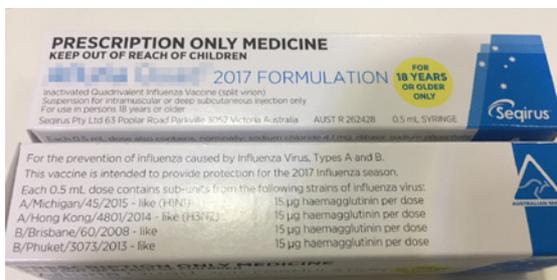
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AUSTRALIA'S No.1 PROBIOTIC

More pharmacy vax feedback

PHARMACY
Daily readers continue to react to comments by Professor Robert Booy of the Influenza Specialists Group (PD Tue), who earlier this



week claimed pharmacist flu vaccinations were using old stock not formulated for 2017 strains.

A number of pharmacists have submitted pack shots of the products they are administering (pictured), detailing the strains included which confirm that "this vaccine is intended to provide protection for the 2017 influenza season".

In particular comments by Booy urging the inclusion of the Michigan influenza strain have drawn

comments, with the pack shot confirming the products used in pharmacy do include this update.

One pharmacist commented: "Professor Robert Booy may be an expert on vaccination but he should comment using fact NOT fiction".

UK approval fast track

THE UK's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has announced major changes to its approval processes, which will see some treatments made available five months earlier than previously.

The fast track appraisals option applies to drugs which "offer exceptional value for money" with the aim of making them available to patients just one month after they are formally licensed.

Other changes to NICE procedures include a new budget impact test under which drugs that will cost more than £20 million in any one of their first three years of use will trigger "commercial discussions between the company and NHS England to mitigate the impact on the rest of the NHS".

Drugs for very rare diseases will also be evaluated on a sliding cost-benefit scale - see nice.org.uk.

Metformin use up

THE high use of metformin monotherapy reflects its place in guidelines as first line therapy, says the Drug Utilisation Sub-Committee (DUSC) of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee.

The data also reveals that the use of flozins and gliptins is increasing but "overall use of diabetes medicines appears generally within PBS restrictions".

DUSC also noted that 22 major submissions had been received for the Mar 2017 meeting of PBAC.

Many other observations were summarised in the report.

Visit pbs.gov.au for the report.

APP smashes records

APP2017 set new records with more than 6,500 delegates attending the conference on the Gold Coast, together with a record 450 exhibitor stands.



Attendees came away from the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's flagship event with renewed confidence, enthusiasm and motivation for the year ahead, the Guild said.

Key elements of the convocation included Minister Greg Hunt's keynote address, Pharmacy of the Year Finalist presentations, the Guild's Pharmacy Transformation program, the Chinese retail market and the Healthy Futures Report.

The social events were also described as an outstanding success with highlights including the welcome reception and the glittering street party.

APP2018 is planned for 03 to 06 May 2018.

Last call for abstracts

WITH the Choosing Wisely Australia National Meeting being held on Thu 04 May 2017 in the Olympic Room at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the organisers have issued an alert that today is the last date to submit abstracts for oral or poster presentations.

Hosted by NPS MedicineWise, the free event will highlight consumer and health professional innovations that support a culture shift as NPS works towards eliminating unnecessary healthcare in Australia.

CLICK HERE for more details.

Statins diabetes risk

THE dose-response for statins on new onset of diabetes suggests female seniors should not be prescribed higher doses of statins, according to a decade-long study evaluating the risk of statin use in elderly Australian women.

A paper published in *Drugs and Aging* describes how University of Queensland and Monash University researchers performed an analysis of a population-based longitudinal cohort study with data linkage to the national death index and to national databases of non-hospital episodes of medical care and prescription medications dispensing.

Participants included 8,372 Australian women born between 1921 and 1926, with statin exposure ascertained based on prescriptions dispensed between 01 Jul 2002 and 31 Aug 2013.

Multivariable Cox regression showed there was a 17% increased risk of developing new-onset diabetes for those on the lowest statin doses, compared with a 51% increased risk for those on the highest dose.

The authors concluded that "elderly women currently taking statins should be carefully and regularly monitored for increased blood glucose to ensure early detection and appropriate management of this potential adverse effect, including consideration of de-prescribing."

CLICK HERE to access the abstract.





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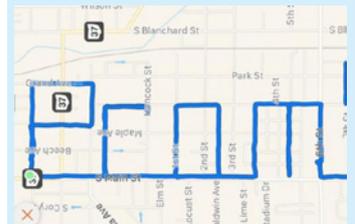
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Dispensary Corner

THIS is a novel way to keep fit. An American teenager has used the Strava smartphone app to track his jogging path through the streets of Findlay, Ohio in order to spell out a prom invitation for his girlfriend.

Joran Fuller travelled almost 9km on the route, with a screen shot of his exercise spelling out the word "Prom?" (**below**).

After the trip he called in on Claire Short and asked her to check the app - and the good news is she apparently said yes.



MEDICAL miracles come in many forms, but few more unusual than an incident in Dublin, Ireland, reported this week in the *Irish Medical Journal*.

The rare case of "penile strangulation" saw a patient present at the emergency room of the Mater University Hospital, with a titanium ring around his, ahem, member.

According to the report, doctors were forced to call the fire brigade after "standard medical equipment" failed to remove the ring, with urgent treatment required to restore blood flow and avoid "organ-threatening complications".

The *BBC* reports the firemen whipped out an angle grinder to remove the ring - with the man fortunately sedated during the 20 minute procedure - and he's since made a "full functional recovery".

NZ pharmacy vax tick

PHARMACIST vaccinators in New Zealand have just been given the green light to provide funded flu vaccines to eligible pregnant women and to people aged over 65.

In a ground-breaking move, the patients can now choose whether they receive their funded flu jab from their pharmacy or GP.

The newly funded service will be available from 01 Apr this year.

Currently about a quarter of the NZ population receives influenza vaccine every year, most of them government funded.

"This step seeks to make better use of health professionals' skills, and improve health services for New Zealanders," according to PHARMAC deputy medical director Dr Bryan Betty.

The Pharmacy Guild of NZ and the Pharmaceutical Society of NZ both welcomed the move, with the PSNZ saying the new provision will help lift the overall uptake of vaccinations in the community.

"We welcome the opportunity to add to the excellent work done by GPs," said the Society's president Graeme Smith, adding "This is an example of pharmacists being able to contribute directly as part of the integrated health care team".

Snapchat specs!



PRICELINE Pharmacy yesterday debuted new "Snapchat Spectacles" at the Virgin Australia Melbourne Fashion Festival (VAMFF), with the nifty gadgets used to "stream backstage content through the eyes of leading beauty experts".

BEAUTYcrew is also participating in the promo of the glasses which have two integrated cameras, and record in 10 second blocks.

Videos are displayed in a distinctive circular format when shared on social media platforms.

Priceline Pharmacy has flown in a number of its Beauty Advisors from stores across Australia to work backstage at the show, led by Priceline Makeup Director Rae Morris and Hair Director Kenneth Stoddart.

Events Calendar

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

31 Mar-2 Apr: Extension Seminar in Clinical Medication Management; Novotel Melbourne; register here: www.shpa.org.au

29-30 Apr: Victorian Pharmacy Conference 2017; Monash University, Parkville; register here: www.psa.org.au

21 May: 2017 PSA WA Annual Seminar; Pan Pacific Perth; register here: www.psa.org.au

4-5 Jun: Naturally Good Expo; ICC Sydney; pre-register for free or \$30 at the door - details here: naturallygood.com.au

16-18 Jun: ConPharm 2017; Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart; find out more: www.aacp.com.au

28-30 Jul: PSA17; Hyatt Regency, Darling Harbour, Sydney; for details see: www.psa17.com

5-9 Aug: Medici Capital Pharmacy Snow Business Conference 2017; Mt. Buller, Victoria; register your interest here: www.medici.com.au

1-3 Sep: Pharmacy Connect; Hilton Hotel Sydney; register here: www.pharmacy-connect.com.au

26-28 Oct: Pharmacy Assistant National Conference; QT Gold Coast; for details see: www.pharmacyassistants.com

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