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## Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news plus a full page from Pharmacy 4 Less.

## 6CPA forum in 2018

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has announced that a Community Pharmacy Stakeholder Forum will take place on Fri 07 Sep 2018 during next year's Pharmacy Connect conference in Sydney.

Guild Qld president Trent Twomey said the forum would provide updates on matters such as the Pharmacy Trial Programs, the implementation of the Pharmacy Compact and Cost Effective Reviews.

"As part of the 6CPA both the Department of Health and the Guild agreed to hold ongoing stakeholder consultation on matters relating to the 6CPA," Twomey said.

About 50 key stakeholders will be invited to attend, including representatives from the Guild, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia and the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia.

## Concern over AZ direct move

PHARMACIES are being urged to contact their local MP, Health Minister Greg Hunt, the Pharmacy Guild and AstraZeneca (AZ) over the company's move to shift about a quarter of its products to direct distribution (PD 30 Oct).

Marc Clavin, chair of the Amcal Guardian National Council (AGNC), has written to Amcal and Guardian member pharmacies saying the AZ move is a "substantial change that will impact your pharmacy business," due to higher-cost medicines bypassing wholesalers.

Clavin said AstraZeneca's action to "cherry-pick profitable items for distribution to their own benefit... threatens the entire medicines supply chain system".

By supplying direct the distributor does not have to meet the 24-hour delivery requirement, is not restricted to sell at or below the approved price to pharmacy, does not need to sell to all pharmacies or meet a rural/remote quota, and does not need to complete the

monthly CSO Agency report.

AstraZeneca is also not subject to any external audit requirements on their service obligations.

Clavin said there will be significant impacts on the whole system of pharmaceutical supply in Australia should manufacturers be allowed to remove profitable PBS medicine from the wholesale channel but "leave the current system to pick up everything that is unprofitable."

"Our unique system of distribution that meets the needs of small rural pharmacies, just as much as large CBD operations, will also be put in jeopardy."

The solution, Clavin said, is to ensure all PBS listed medicines be made available to CSO wholesalers at equivalent pricing, in addition to any direct distribution channels.

The National Pharmaceutical Services Association has warned that without such action "cost to pharmacy will go up, service will go down and there will be a negative impact on customers".

## Summer spotlight

THE upcoming *Pharmacy Daily* Summer Spotlight feature will now appear from 14 Nov, with spots still available for suppliers to showcase products and offers for the upcoming holiday season.

Each insertion includes an image, a brief description and a call to action - to have your products included call 1300 799 220 or email [advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au).

## AMR low on radar

RISKS associated with antimicrobial resistance (AMR) are relatively low on the radar of most Australians but awareness is increasing according to NPS MedicineWise survey findings for World Antibiotic Awareness Week (13-19 Nov 2017).

While 25% of respondents acknowledged AMR as a current concern, up from only 11% in the 2015 survey, more than half (53%) claimed they were either unsure or didn't think they would ever be affected - go to [nps.org.au](http://nps.org.au) for more.



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## Guild-Priceline training link

**THE** Pharmacy Guild of Australia and Priceline Pharmacy have entered into a partnership arrangement to provide key training and education services to all



Priceline Pharmacy team members.

The Guild said its experience with the vocational education sector will also mean Priceline Pharmacy stores are able to take advantage of all available government funding opportunities to assist in the delivery of qualifications or skill sets.

Richard Vincent, ceo and md of Priceline's parent company API, welcomed the partnership saying, "Priceline Pharmacy understands that to be successful in this challenging environment we must have a pharmacy workforce that is skilled and confident when engaging with our customers. "Developing superior skills and knowledge within our team is a crucial part of enhancing our customers' experience."

Guild national president George Tambassis noted, "Working with a brand like Priceline Pharmacy means that the Guild can extend its reach into community pharmacy and ensure that all pharmacy staff have access to our quality training products," he said.

"We congratulate them for this initiative and look forward to working together to develop the skills and knowledge required by

our customers and our industry."

The joint release said the training program will take a "whole of pharmacy" approach encompassing the needs of

pharmacists, dispensary assistants, front-of-store managers, pharmacy assistants, and category managers.

Priceline Pharmacy teams will have access to more than 70 individual units that make up four different qualifications and to this end, the two partners said they will work together to identify skill gaps, relevant training needs and paths to fulfilling these needs.

## AusPAR transparency

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has announced the content of Australian Public Assessment Reports (AusPARs) will be updated to provide increased transparency of TGA's evaluation process through the inclusion of a registration timeline in each AusPAR published after 01 Jan 2018.

In related news, the TGA co-authored with the European Medicines Agency (EMA) to publish a peer-reviewed, open access review article on transparency in medicines regulation, including AusPARs and EPARs.

The published paper can be accessed by [CLICKING HERE](#).

## Losing weight is not so beautiful

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has issued safety advisory notes around two weight loss products that contain the undeclared substance sibutramine, a product withdrawn from the market in Oct 2010 due to an associated increased risk of major cardiac events.

The products are



Beautiful Lose Weight Gold 30 Capsules and Lose Weight 30 capsules (both pictured).

The former product also contains phenolphthalein which was a prescription-only substance previously marketed as an oral laxative, withdrawn from sale from many markets in the late 1990's due to concerns over its carcinogenicity with long term use.

TGA investigations have shown that a number of people in Australia may have bought the products online.

## NICE treats FH early

**INHERITED** high cholesterol, or familial hypercholesterolaemia (FH), should be identified and treated early, according to new guidance provided by the UK's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

Those at risk of FH should be offered DNA tests to confirm they have the condition, NICE recommends.

## Gonorrhoea up 63%

**IN WHAT** almost amounts to an epidemic-proportion flare, gonorrhoea and syphilis diagnoses are increasing in Australia, with the former up 63% over the past three years, according to the latest Annual Surveillance Report on HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections (STIs) in Australia, released by the Kirby Institute at UNSW Sydney.

The same report, on the other hand, revealed that HIV is stable, and between Mar and Dec 2016, an estimated 30,434 people have been cured of hepatitis C due to the availability of new direct acting antiviral therapy for hepatitis C.

The rise in gonorrhoea was reported as particularly prevalent among young heterosexual people in major cities.

Kirby Institute head of the Surveillance, Evaluation and Research Program Associate Professor Rebecca Guy said, "Up until recently, gonorrhoea had been uncommon in young heterosexual people living in major cities.

"Rising rates in this group highlight the need for initiatives to raise awareness among clinicians and young people about the importance of testing," Guy said.

The report also shows that over the past five years hepatitis B diagnoses have declined by 27% in people aged less than 25 years, reflecting the impact of the infant and adolescent vaccination programs.

The full 'Annual Surveillance Report' will be officially launched at the Australasian HIV & AIDS and Sexual Health conference in Canberra tomorrow.

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## Dispensary Corner

**FORGET** nicotine replacement therapy or pharmaceutical solutions to help people stop smoking - a Japanese company is offering an extra week's holiday to its non-smoking staff members.

A spokesperson for the marketing firm called Piala said the offer has proved extremely popular among the 120 staff, with the policy introduced as a benefit for non-smokers to compensate for smoking breaks taken by colleagues.

About two thirds of the company's staff do not smoke, and that figure is now set to increase, the spokesman said.

**ARE** you right-handed or left-handed, right-footed or left-footed or do you dress left or right?

As animals go, we are not too different to our flying buzzing honey-producing relatives.

Apparently honey bees also care about which way to go when confronted with a decision to go left or right around an obstacle, according to researchers from the Brain Institute at the University of Queensland.

About 55% of bees were impartial, while of the remaining 45%, about half were left-biased and half were right-biased.

Researchers postulate the apparent left- or right-handedness could contribute to the efficiency of moving in swarms and have potential applications in guiding the steering of a fleet of drone aircraft.

Visit [uq.edu.au](http://uq.edu.au) for the buzz.



## Codeine claims 'emotive'

**THE** current debate regarding the proposed rescheduling of over the counter (OTC) codeine-containing products to prescription only has driven some individuals and organisations to make claims "which are emotive and erroneous" according to the president of the NSW Branch of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) Professor Peter Carroll.

Carroll is also Sydney University of Notre Dame School of Medicine Professor and head of pharmacology and University of Sydney Honorary Professor in the discipline of Pharmacology.

In a scholarly, well-referenced open letter, Carroll writes he has "tried to address some of these claims from a scientific and clinical perspective."

He presents seven arguments which can be summarised as:

1. It is incorrect to claim that the amount of codeine in OTC codeine-containing analgesics is not efficacious as it is not supported by the evidence
2. To claim that Australia is out of step with other countries regarding the scheduling of

codeine is inaccurate, and does not tell the full story

3. Any claim that codeine is a major cause of drug death in Australia is not supported by the evidence, and is untrue
4. The prescription only move for codeine containing products has the potential to increase its use
5. A switch to an ibuprofen and paracetamol combination could lead to serious adverse health outcomes for up to one million people in Australia
6. Claims suggesting that codeine can cause life-threatening toxicity in up to 4-10% of the population is a gross over-exaggeration, and is not supported by the evidence
7. There is no evidence to support the claim that many consumers are using OTC codeine-containing products to treat chronic pain.

"If codeine is being used to treat chronic pain, it is far more likely to be as a result of the 3.7 million prescriptions written over 12 months for products containing 30mg codeine and 500mg paracetamol," he said.

To view Professor Carroll's letter [CLICK HERE](#).

## Injectable tan alert

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration has warned consumers not to use Melanotan-I, Melanotan-II and similar injectable tanning products which it says can cause serious side effects.

The items are usually bought online often from overseas websites.

Adverse effects from the products can include moles and freckles, nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, facial flushing, involuntary stretching and yawning or even spontaneous erections.

The TGA warned it was illegal to import Melanotan or any other injectable into Australia without a script from a medical practitioner.

## Innovation Grexit

**A GREEK** Government-imposed mandatory 25% discount on a Roche cancer drug has seen the company withdraw the product from the country.

Greece's Minister of Health Andreas Xanthou last Tuesday expressed dismay over the decision to withdraw the product, saying the move was "unacceptable".

"Citizens' access to innovative medicines should not be a business decision," he said.

The cancer treatment that was pulled from Greece by Roche is Cotellic (cobimetinib), which is used to treat melanoma in combination with Zelboraf (vemurafenib).

A Roche spokesperson said the imposition of the mandatory 25% discount on innovative products, which is added to a series of other forced discounts, made supply of Cotellic in Greece at the reimbursed price unsustainable.

"We need to protect our company from the extremely unfavourable environment created by the rebate and discount based pricing policy for pharmaceutical companies in Greece," the company said.

## WIN WITH DESIGNER BRANDS

This week Pharmacy Daily and Designer Brands are giving away a set of three Lavish Lip Oil valued at \$35.97.

Hydrate and add glowing, pigmented colour to lips with this bi-phase lip oil. Give the cute little bottle a quick shake to mix the colour and hydrating oil formula together and get ready for the perfect, pretty pout. Use the integrated tapered cushion applicator to press this decadent treat into lips for a burst of glistening colour. Super comfortable to wear, this lip oil is always smooth on the lips and never sticky. [CLICK HERE](#) to see more.

To win, be the first from NSW or ACT to send the answer to the question to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

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