



PBS no political play thing: McBride

FEDERAL Health Minister, Greg Hunt, is being accused of “politicising the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)” by announcing new listings to gain attention.

Pharmacist turned Australian Labor Party MP, Emma McBride (pictured), proposed a motion calling on the House of Representatives to note that 20 drugs that have been recommended for listing by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) “will never list on the PBS because pricing negotiations with the manufacturers have broken down”.

“I move this motion because, as a pharmacist - the only pharmacist in this place - I am dismayed by the Minister for Health’s shameless politicisation of the PBS by spruiking the listing of new drugs and then claiming the credit,” she

said.

“It occurred again this weekend with the long overdue listing of Symdeko, seven months after it was approved.

“It is my view that a PBS listing—that is, the subsidising of a medicine—should not be turned into a political stunt or self-promotion event.

“Listings are in the interest of public health and they matter. They should not be reduced to a photo opportunity for a political agenda.

“When I gave notice of this motion in early Sep we were aware of some 20 medications that had not been listed, despite having been recommended by the PBAC.

“Since then the PBAC has made public its recommendations from the Jul meeting, which took the total number of drugs waiting to be listed by Minister Hunt to almost 60.

“These are drugs that have been



recommended for listing by the independent experts, the PBAC, because they stack up on both clinical and cost grounds.

“The minister’s failure to act on PBAC recommendations to list medications in a timely manner or to list them at all is not the only barrier to Australians accessing affordable medicines.

“The minister can’t spruik drug listings and claim the credit for them.

“It’s not okay.”

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news including our weekly **Health & Beauty** feature and a full page from **Wizard Pharmacy Services**.

MMR training

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia’s Intern Training Program has announced it is now offering interns registered with the program the opportunity to complete Medication Management Review (MMR) Stage One Training.

The training, available from the Australian College of Pharmacy will prepare interns to undertake the Australian Association of Consultant Pharmacy Stage Two assessment and ultimately to conduct medication reviews.

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References: 1. Dermatology Expert Group. Therapeutic Guidelines: Dermatology, version 4. Topical corticosteroid preparations (Appendix 4.1). Therapeutic Guidelines Ltd [Internet]. 2019 [cited 2019 June 28]. Available from: <https://halicrds.to.org.au/view/Topic200c41e-topical-corticosteroid-preparations>

2. Kloxema Cream Approved Product Information, 12 September 2017.
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Managing health privacy in pharmacy

THE Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) has produced a wide-ranging document to support health professionals, including direct reference to pharmacists, to guide them around issues of health privacy.

The *Guide to Health Privacy* outlines steps to embedding privacy in health practices, so as to comply with obligations under the Privacy Act 1988, including collection of patient data, comments, interactions or correspondence.

In some cases, there may be video footage that could identify patients recorded on in-store CCTV.

"Health service providers constantly handle health information about their patients and understand that health information is sensitive in nature



and needs to be treated carefully," the guide states.

"Handling this information appropriately underpins the trust in a provider-patient relationship," it says.

"The guide outlines the key practical steps that health service providers should take to embed good privacy in their practice.

"In addition, the guide outlines how key privacy obligations apply to and operate in the healthcare context."

Guidance around consent issues, identification, de-identification and disclosure are addressed.

Consent, a significant element in the guide, needs to be adequately informed, voluntary, current, specific and within the capacity of the individual to understand.

The document is available for download at oaic.gov.au.

Armed robbery

A PRICELINE Pharmacy at North Parramatta was the scene of a frightening attack by a man and a woman brandishing a small axe, or tomahawk, on Mon night.

Police from Parramatta Police Area Command attended the scene shortly before 10 pm to find that the robbers had escaped on foot with cash and prescription medicines, after threatening three female staff members.

No staff were physically injured in the incident - investigations continue.

Zantac recall

FOLLOWING widespread recalls of antacid therapy ranitidine (including leading originator brand Zantac), in the UK, Europe, Canada and the US, Aspen Pharmacare Australia has released a statement.

The company told *Pharmacy Daily*, "Following the TGA's latest advice regarding ranitidine products, Aspen Australia has begun a retail level recall on all Zantac products".

"Aspen Australia treats the quality of its products with utmost diligence and will continue to work closely with the TGA on this matter," a spokesperson said.

The TGA has confirmed its previously held position that the "additional risk posed by NDMA from ranitidine, at the levels identified to date, is considered to be very low" and "there is no immediate health risk" - see tga.gov.au.

Prescription drugs drone deliveries

US FREIGHT company United Parcel Service (UPS) has teamed up with 9,800-strong pharmacy chain CVS Health to explore drone delivery of prescription pharmaceuticals to consumers.

The announcement follows last week's revelation from rival logistics firm FedEx which has just completed its first residential drone delivery under a pilot program.

FedEx is already testing business to consumer drone deliveries with Wing, Google's drone subsidiary, and Walgreens.

The UPS arrangement, under



the banner UPS Flight Forward, and its partner Matternet this month became the first drone delivery service to receive full certification from the Federal Aviation Administration to operate a drone airline.

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Dispensary Corner

PHARMACISTS are constantly being urged not to be afraid of charging a fee for services.

However, one enterprising British pharmacist is attracting a lot of negative attention for his £45 charge for providing ear piercing services.

Social media users have voiced their discontent with the pharmacist's fee describing it as "extortionate" and "a rip off", with one person musing "ice-cubes to numb, sewing needle to pierce, stud to put in afterwards. Didn't even have to leave the house... God bless the 80s".

However, the pharmacist defended the £45 charge, noting that "it depends on where they're having it done", highlighting that ear-piercing at Claire's Accessories (a British chain store) could cost up to £68.

"If it's just a piercing, a lot goes into it, there's documentation and aftercare," the unnamed pharmacist said.

"We use special titanium studs from Calfon, they're not just any cheap studs."

The pharmacist added that the store uses a single-use piercing gun to limit the risk of cross contamination and eco-friendly titanium studs.

"I had mine done 40 years ago with ice cube and a needle, but health and safety would kill you if you tried to do that now," the pharmacist said.

The pharmacy also provides care kits for children and baby's who have had their ears pierced.

Counselling around anti-vaxers

PHARMACISTS are universally supportive of the science behind vaccination programs and occasionally are asked how to handle a friend or relative who is anti-vaccination or antisience/conspiracy theory oriented.

University of Sydney Faculty of Medicine and Health, Professor Julie Leask, and Macquarie University PhD candidate Maryke Steffens have penned a useful article, *4 ways to talk with vaccine skeptics* and published in *The Conversation*.

With a recurring theme of keep-your-cool, the authors stress the value of maintaining valued relationships throughout their research-based recommendations.

The first option is to not even go there - this means if one encounters a person with fixed

beliefs, little is gained by engaging.

This approach is particularly relevant to social media forums, where entering into the discussion may actually give the anti-vax movement more exposure.

Secondly, where the discussion is in the context of a friends or family event, when people hold strong views on either side, again very little is gained by presenting the science.

These relationships are important and respect for each person at the event may lead one to say something like, "This is a topic we all have strong views about. We could just argue, but I propose that we leave this one alone."

Thirdly, where relationships are again important, but one may feel strongly about advocating, a simple statement of affirmation

about one's own commitment to vaccination, without condemnation of others' views, is more effective.

In the case of close relatives being misled by the antivax/conspiracy theorists, the article's authors recommend understanding people's concerns and motivations, affirming them as parents, offering to share information and closing with an open door plan saying something like, "Can we talk about this again some time?"

In conclusion, Leask and Steffens warn, "Jump in without thinking, and you risk wasting your time, affecting relationships with family and friends, or even inadvertently amplifying anti-vaccine views."

"Instead, assess that person's position on vaccination, your goals and what is most important in your relationship."

NEW PRODUCTS

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