

Symbion chief quits

SYMBION Health managing director and ceo Robert Cooke has this morning resigned from his position, effective immediately.

Fellow directors James Hall, Paul McClintock, and Christine Bennet have also resigned, with the move following the board's recommendation of Primary Health Care's takeover.

Primary ceo Ed Bateman has been appointed as a Symbion director, along with Gregory Gardiner and Terence Smith.

Primary this morning advised that it now holds 85.2% of Symbion with its offer set to close 11 Mar.

Symbion said it expects to make an announcement shortly with respect to the appointment of a new chairman and ceo.

NHHRC pharmacy snub

NO pharmacy representative has been appointed to the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission (NHHRC), which will be chaired by Chief Medical Officer at MBF Australia, Dr Christine Bennett.

Federal cabinet today formally approved the establishment of the Commission to develop a "long-term health reform plan for a modern Australia".

The ten-member Commission has been set up to provide a blueprint for tackling future challenges in the health system including the burden of chronic disease, the ageing population and rising health costs.

NSW Act starts

THE new *Pharmacy Practice Act* came into effect in NSW yesterday, with the legislation retaining 'pharmacist only' ownership of pharmacies.

However it also now allows for the ownership of pharmacies by "pharmacist corporations" - i.e. companies where all shareholders and directors are pharmacists.

The Act also provides for the registration of pharmacy graduates as "intern pharmacists" to enable completion of practical experience requirements for full registration.

It also adds a second consumer representative to the NSW Pharmacy Board.

RGH e-Bulletin

THIS week's edition of the Repatriation General Hospital Pharmacy e-Bulletin gives an overview of the use of Fentanyl lozenges (Actiq, distributed by Sigma Pharmaceuticals' new subsidiary Orphan Australia).

The lozenges will be listed on the palliative care schedule of the PBS from 01 Apr.

More info in the bulletin available at no charge from chris.alderman@rgh.sa.gov.au.



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DISPENSARY CORNER

ONE of the doctors at the new \$100m Bathurst Base Hospital is so untrusting of the hospital's alarm system that he's bought an air horn from a sports store, so he can be called in an emergency.

"We still do not have an effective alarm system in the theatres and recovery," said the Brendan Smith, co-director of the hospital's intensive care unit.

He said the emergency alarm couldn't be heard across the theatre complex, meaning nurses had resorted to running through corridors looking for doctors during an emergency.

"Yesterday we did a couple of cases in the theatre and the only way we were able to do it was because I went to the shop and bought an air horn."

The ongoing crisis has led to all operations at the hospital being suspended.

CHOLESTEROL alert!

The world's biggest hamburger has been created in a Detroit, USA restaurant this week.

Dubbed "The Absolutely Ridiculous Burger," the 60kg US\$350 snack of beef, bacon and cheese is available at Mallie's Sports Bar and Grill.

It's not exactly a take-away, needing 12 hours of preparation, and orders require 24 hours notice.

Three men are needed to flip the burger, using two massive sheets of steel.




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