PBS medicines supply review

A review of supply arrangements for PBS medicines in residential aged care facilities and private hospitals has moved onto the next stage.

Following a consultation process between Healthcare Management Advisors (HMA) and key groups, a discussion paper was prepared and published in December.

The deadline for responses was extended until 30 Jan at a request from a number of stakeholders.

In Apr stakeholders will attend workshops in Canberra, Adelaide, Melbourne, Perth, Darwin, Sydney and Brisbane to discuss potential options for improving existing arrangements.

Participants will assess the feasibility of the various options proposed; to register see www.guild.org.au for the timetable and relevant forms.

PSA clarifies 5CPA role

There should be no doubt that the pharmacy organisations need to get together and deliver an agreed long-term strategy for the development of sustainable professional services in the future.

“This issue is high on PSA’s agenda to progress over the next few months,” Plunkett added.

Hey big spender

Consumer spending on pharmaceuticals is experiencing the biggest rise of any retail sector, according to the latest figures released today.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has revealed consumers spent 16.3% more on pharmaceuticals in the last three months of 2008.

In second place, appliances and music saw a rise of 7.3%, followed by newspapers, books and liquor, all with a 4.3% increase.

Supermarkets only showed only a 1.7% increase.

The worst-hit sector was cafes and restaurants, which declined almost 13% - the largest annual decline in the 25 years that records have been kept.
New Medical Chief

PROFESSOR Jim Bishop AO has been appointed as the new Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer, replacing incumbent Professor John Horvath.

Bishop will play a key role in developing and administering big reforms aimed at transforming Australia’s health system.

Prof Bishop is Chief Cancer Officer and CEO of the Cancer Institute NSW, Professor of Cancer Medicine at the University of Sydney, a Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia.

iNova continues growth

iNOVA Pharmaceuticals appears to be bucking a trend for downsizing in the pharmaceutical industry, yesterday announcing plans to lift staff, production and capacity this year.

Growth strategies will include selective geographical expansion, business development, and product in-licensing activities.

iNova has recruited Norbert Walther to replace outgoing CFO Chand Khanna, who’s retiring this month, and has also taken on Mark Lewis from IMS Health to lead the “commercialisation execution across the company.”

And the firm’s new Australian/NZ gm Peter Mayrick will take up his role in the next few weeks, moving from Pharmalink (Innovex) /Inovail Australia/NZ.

iNova is also spending over $2m on additional equipment for its Sydney manufacturing facility.

CEO Andrew Howden said “Product acquisitions and in-licensing initiatives are paramount to iNova’s future development.”

He confirmed that iNova was also developing plans to enter the Chinese market “very soon”.

The Power of Pharmacy...

LAST night it was the turn of pharmacists in the north of Sydney to learn about Mirixa, with about 80 pharmacists being introduced to the system by Guild President Kos Sclavos.

Set to be officially launched at the APP conference on the Gold Coast early in Apr, the first Mirixa program to be implemented in Australia will target chronic therapy patients with a low MedsIndex compliance score.

Above from left at last night’s workshop: Annmarie Reeve, Barkers Pharmacy Roseville; Marcus Langman, Harrisons Pharmacy; Chabel Azzi, Alphapharm; Robin Salvestro, Priceline Pharmacy Griffith; and Natsha Menzies, Oze Pharmacy.

LEFT: Also at the North Sydney event, from left: Adam Lawson, GlaxoSmithKline; Faray Cogan, Gardners Rd Day & Night Chemist; Georgia Spinoulas, Gardners Rd Day & Night Chemist; Sylvia Hanna, Pulse Warringah Mall Pharmacy; Bianca Esposito, GlaxoSmithKline.