

## Fred info centre

FRED Health has today launched the Fred Help Centre, a "free new online space" designed to provide the firm's customers with additional support and resources.

The site which is available at [help.fredhealth.com.au](http://help.fredhealth.com.au) is a one-stop place for pharmacists to access product updates and information, tutorials and demonstrations, as well as providing direct feedback about future directions for the products.

"We saw an opportunity to use innovative technologies to provide additional support for pharmacies," said National Training Manager Nicole Sorbello.

The site uses the latest Web 2.0 technology including forums and blogs, social networking tools, movie tutorials, RSS feeds and a "Wiki-style knowledgebase".

More info 1300 731 888.

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## Officials meet on flu action

HEALTH officials from across Australia are meeting this afternoon to discuss further possible measures to contain swine flu, after the eleventh case was confirmed in

Australia today - a 17-year-old boy who has had no apparent contact with the virus.

Health Minister Nicola Roxon said it was too early to say what the next stage was, adding: "we do need to treat this as a serious matter."

The current 'containment' phase is seeing health workers trace and quarantine anyone who's been in contact with confirmed cases.

The average age of sufferers across the globe so far is 16.

The Pharmacy Guild has updated its Pandemic Key Items supply availability, continuing to advise that antivirals targeted for overseas travellers wanting to take a supply.

## Europe PI proposal

UK regulatory authorities are seeking feedback on a proposal which would allow pharmaceutical companies to "disseminate certain information on prescription medicines directly to patients."

The move aims to provide a framework for the provision, particularly via the internet, of "non-promotional" information about medications in Europe - with the current ban on direct consumer advertising maintained.

The European Commission has estimated a substantial annual financial benefit from the proposal due to better consumer awareness of symptoms, earlier treatment, better interaction with health professionals and more compliance.

## GMIA correction

HEALTH Minister Nicola Roxon's speech on PBS reforms this week (PD Wed) was made at the *Generic Medicines Australia 2009* conference.

This has no connection with the Generic Medicines Industry Association.

## The eyes have it



THIS week an official ceremony was held at Blackmores' Warriemore Campus to commemorate the \$2m contributed to the Macular Degeneration Foundation through sales of Blackmores eye health products since 2002.

Blackmores donates a percentage of the sales of its Lutein-Vision, Macu-Vision and Lutein-Vision Advanced to support the MD Foundation's education, awareness and research programs across Australia.

Macular degeneration is the

leading cause of blindness and severe vision loss in Australia.

Next week is MD Awareness Week, with foundation ceo Julie Heraghty urging consumers to have their eyes tested and make sure the macula is checked.

Pictured above with a special commemorative plaque at the ceremony on Thu are, from left: Marcus Blackmore, Julie Heraghty, Dr Paul Beaumont and Ita Buttrose, who presented Blackmores with a Broad-leafed Paperbark tree to mark the occasion.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

THE first ever mobile blood bank for dogs has launched in the UK, and is now on the road and looking for canine donors.

It's an initiative of Pet Blood Bank UK, a charity established in March 2007 to collect, process, store and supply pet blood.

Dogs who visit the specially designed trailer are given a meal afterwards, as well as a goody bag of toys to thank them for their donation.

It takes about 7 minutes to give blood, and pets are also given a quick check-up.

"We have always had a shortage of donors, so it is exactly the same as it is for humans," said director Wendy Barnett.

"If you went into hospital, you would expect the blood to be there. We are aiming to ensure it's the same for our pets," she said.

A BRITISH woman has lost 25kg in just four months after being hypnotised into thinking she'd had gastric banding surgery.

The 35-year-old had five sessions of hypnotherapy, which involved her being talked through every step of the procedure as though she was in an operating theatre.

She now believes her stomach is the size of a golf ball, and feels extremely full if she tries to eat large portions of food.

Reports say the same clinic has successfully used hypnotherapy to help people stop smoking.

ASTRONAUTS aboard the International Space Station have toasted each other's health - for the first time using recycled urine.

NASA says its Mission Control gave the space travellers a "go" to drink water purified by the station's new recycling system.

"This has been the stuff of science fiction," said one of the engineers behind the system.

"Everybody's talked about recycling water in a closed loop system but nobody's ever done it before," he said.

Reports don't say how the recycled urine tasted.