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Guild Group chief

MARIO Pirone has been appointed as the new managing director of the Guild Group, replacing retiring md Brian Bengier.

Pirone will take up the role 19 Oct, and has extensive insurance and financial services experience including being ceo of CGU Insurance from 2004 to 2008.

"Mario brings vast leadership experience to the company and we were particularly impressed by his strategic focus on both customers and employees," said Guild Group Chairman, Harry Zafer.

TGA closely monitors H1N1 vaccine

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration and its expert advisory committees will be "closely monitoring the side effects" from the use of the new Panvax H1N1 influenza vaccine which is currently being rolled out across the country.

The TGA yesterday issued its latest Adverse Drug Reactions Bulletin, confirming that the vaccine is manufactured using the same processes as for seasonal influenza vaccines.

"Common short-lived side effects that occur with seasonal flu vaccines and may occur with Panvax include soreness at the site of injection, headache, mild fever, body aches and fatigue for a short time after vaccination," the bulletin said.

However as with all medicines "there is always the potential for unexpected or rare serious side effects to occur," with the committee urging healthcare practitioners to report adverse reactions to Panvax H1N1 influenza vaccine by calling 18 02 007.

The bulletin also highlights the risk of tardive dyskinesia in patients receiving long term metoclopramide treatment, particularly in the elderly.

The bulletin also discusses "washout or taper" when switching antidepressants, to avoid the possibly serious serotonin syndrome.

Cough remedies

THE new issue of NPS' *Australian Prescriber* includes an article considering the evidence against cough products for children, reiterating that such medicines can cause serious side effects in young children and offering a range of alternative remedies - details at www.australianprescriber.com.

Guild assistant training site

THE Pharmacy Guild is piloting a new training initiative for pharmacy assistants, saying the move "recognises the benefits that customers gain from knowledgeable, proactive pharmacy staff".

The first module has been developed by Guild Training in partnership with Colgate Palmolive Australia, and is named 'Gum Care'.

The course aims to provide assistance with knowledge of a healthy mouth and conditions which cause mouth, gum and tooth disease as well as "identifying the products in the pharmacy that assist customers treat or prevent specific conditions."

Fred Health bonus Amex points deal

AMERICAN Express and Fred Health have today announced a new three-year partnership, under which Fred Health customers can earn bonus Amex Membership Rewards points on account payments.

The program applies to pharmacists who sign up to pay quarterly Fred invoices by American Express direct debit, receiving two bonus points for every dollar spent on Fred Help and Fred Shop purchases.

Amex spokesperson Elena Wise said the partnership "gives our pharmacist Cardmembers yet another opportunity to use their Business or Corporate Card for business-related spend."

The program runs until 31 Mar 2012, with payments and allocations of bonus points automated each month after sign-up.

More info 1300 731 888.

MPharm marking

THE Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain says it won't be taking any further action over alleged "marking irregularities" on the accredited Master of Pharmacy undergraduate degree offered by the University of Manchester.

The RPSGB is the accrediting body, and launched a probe last month which confirmed there had been irregularities in one module.

The university has taken steps to remedy the situation with the RPSGB saying it's satisfied that neither academic standards nor patient safety have been compromised.

Guild Training has also launched a new *Pharmacy Reward* program which allows assistants to earn rewards points while they learn, which can be redeemed for items such as iPods, digital cameras, Playstations or spa treatments.

Assistants will automatically be enrolled in the rewards scheme when they sign up for the first Colgate course.

The online training is initially only available in Victoria, with plans to roll out nationally when additional courses will be added.

Victorian pharmacy assistants are being urged to get in quickly, with a bonus 500 rewards points for the first 1000 to enrol - sign up at www.guildtraining.com.au.

The training is free and online, allowing assistants to work on it in their own time, either in the pharmacy or at home.

UnityHealth also runs an online pharmacy training program called iTherapeutics, which recently celebrated its 5000th member since launching just over a year ago (PD 25 Aug).

Book for Patagonia

PHARMACISTS wanting to participate in the Vic PSA's 2010 Expedition Education trip to Patagonia (PD 14 Aug) are being urged to book quickly, with more than half of the 50 available places already sold.

Vic PSA president Mark Feldschuh said the conference will deliver 12 to 16 hours of accredited CPD activities, interwoven with an in-depth exploration of the people, places and culture visited.

More info 1300 139 293.

Sigma BMS finalised

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals this morning confirmed the completion of its \$60m acquisition of the Bristol-Myers Squibb manufacturing facility in Victoria, along with a number of BMS pharmaceutical brands (PD 07 Sep).

The deal covers 15 products including Lipostat and Pravachol.

No issue on Monday

THE next issue of *Pharmacy Daily* will be published on Tue 06 Oct, due to the Labour Day public holiday on Monday in NSW.

Win an A'kin pureBaby pack

CONGRATULATIONS to Alicia Moore of Webstercare who was the first *Pharmacy Daily* reader yesterday to tell us the 2 certified organic ingredients in [A'kin] pureBaby Nurturing Moisturiser are Shea Butter and Rosehip Oil.



Every day this week, A'kin pureBaby is giving *Pharmacy Daily* readers the chance to win an [A'kin] pureBaby Complete Care Pack, valued at \$74.75 each.

The [A'kin] pureBaby Complete Care Pack contains all full size products from the

[A'kin] pureBaby range, presented in a handy Eco baby case.

[A'kin] pureBaby is crafted in Australia with the purest and most gentle botanical ingredients to care for your baby's skin naturally.

[A'kin] pureBaby has been dermatologist tested and formulated paraben and sulfate free to provide pure, gentle protection for your baby and total peace of mind for you.

For your chance to win this sensational baby pack, simply be the first reader to email the correct answer to the daily question below to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

What Vitamin can be found in [A'kin] pureBaby Peaceful Calming Mist?

Check out the Purist website for hints at www.purist.com.

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 Guild

CPD Calendar

WELCOME to Pharmacy Daily's Continuing Professional Development Calendar, featuring upcoming events, conferences and opportunities for pharmacists to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

- 05 Oct:** Embracing Opiate Replacement Therapy, Monash University - 03 9389 4007.
- 05 Oct:** Antiplatelet and Anticoagulant Therapy in Stroke Prevention, Sandy Bay Tas lorraine.norris@psa.org.au.
- 10 Oct:** 'Clear Communication' seminar run by the NSW Assn of Health Professionals, PSA St Leonards - 0401 998 943.
- 10-11 Oct:** Stage One Accreditation Medication Management Review Workshop in Townsville - 07 4725 8915.
- 12 Oct:** A PSA seminar on Herbal Medicine - the Inside Story will be held in Toowoomba Qld - kellym@psaqld.org.au.
- 14 Oct:** Pharmaceutical Council of WA lecture on COPD - register Igregory@pcwa.com.au.
- 15-18 Oct:** Pharmacy Australia Congress 2009 will be held in Sydney - www.pac2009.com.au.
- 29-31 Oct:** The Pharmacy Assistant National Conference - www.pharmacyassistants.com.
- 04 Nov:** Type 2 Diabetes and hypercholesterolaemia with Prof Peter Carroll, Pharmacy Guild St Leonards - 02 9467 7170.
- 5-8 Nov:** National Medicines Management Conference in Perth - www.shpamm2009.com.
- 12 Nov:** The ASMI annual conference and agm at the Australian Technology Park in Redfern, Sydney - asmi.com.au.
- 16-23 Jan 2010:** Pharmacy Study Tour in Aspen, Colorado - www.medic.com.au/study-tours.
- 4-17 Feb 2010:** PSA Expedition Education conference in Chile and Patagonia. Limited to 50 people - 1300 139 293.
- 28 Apr-7 May 2010:** The PSA will hold its 35th annual offshore conference in Beijing and Shanghai - 1300 139 293.

\$1.9m loss for HIP owner

LISTED pharmacy franchisor Health Corporation yesterday reported its annual results for the year to 30 Jun, with a consolidated loss amounting to \$1,945,590.

The company operates the Health Information Pharmacy franchise and is also behind the Chemconsult medication compliance program.

Total revenue for the company was \$2.2 million, with expenses including about \$523,000 in finance costs, a further \$558,000 in "professional & consultancy fees", \$1.5m in staff costs and a \$547,000 doubtful debt provision.

The figure was slightly worse than the result from last year, when the company reported a \$1.886m loss.

The company said that during the year it had embarked on a major restructure of its operations "which is now yielding anticipated benefits."

"The network, operating under the banner of Health Information Pharmacy (HIP) continues to expand," it said, with five new franchised stores welcomed during the year. Three stores commenced under the new management model, one of which was new to the group and "will become a flagship store for the company in Victoria".

Other initiatives include the commercialisation of Chemconsult

FDA Heparin change

THE US Food and Drug Administration has alerted health professionals to a change in the way heparin is manufactured, which is expected to decrease the potency of the anticoagulant.

The United States Pharmacopoeia has adopted new manufacturing controls for heparin, including a modification of the reference standard for the drug's unit dose.

The new heparin will be shipped in the US from 08 Oct, with the changes meaning doses match the World Health Organization's International Standard unit dose definition used in Europe for many years.

The revised USP standard for heparin is about 10% less potent than the previous USP unit, with the change meaning adjustments may be required to achieve the desired anticoagulant effect.

"which will have a significant impact to the ongoing success of the business," and for which a worldwide patent has been lodged.

The group is forecasting a significant increase in revenue from Chemconsult to occur over the next few years.

"Health Corporation is making good progress and we anticipate the ongoing support and patience of our shareholders during this period of restructure and growth of the business will be rewarded," the annual financial statement said.

Pharmacist prescribing

THE benefits of an expanded role of pharmacists in the UK through being granted prescribing rights has been outlined in an article in the latest edition of the National Prescriber Service's *Australian Prescriber* publication.

Professor Nick Barber of the University of London's pharmacy department, said the introduction of prescribing rights for UK pharmacists followed concern that "patients may suffer unnecessarily, or go long periods without treatment because they cannot get to a doctor who can write them the prescription they require."

"Supplementary" prescribing rights refers to prescribing following a doctor's diagnosis and agreed clinical management plan, and this was introduced for UK pharmacists in 2003.

In 2006 pharmacists role was further expanded when they were given "independent" prescribing rights, under which they work as part of a team with the doctor in primary and secondary care, but are legally responsible for their own prescribing and contribute to patient medical records.

In Australia the Pharmacy Guild is advocating an even more conservative prescribing role for pharmacists than supplementary prescribing, described as Medication Continuance.

"As the Australian Government responds to the various commissioned reports on the health system it is hoped that the overseas experience of pharmacists and their expanded role is taken into consideration," said Guild President Kos Slavovs.



DISPENSARY CORNER

A BRITISH local council is under fire for spending about \$15,000 of taxpayers funds on a sex guide for seniors.

Manchester Council produced the 47-page booklet offering tips on condom use, intimacy and combating impotence.

Opposition councillor Ann Widdecombe said: "I think this guide is an incredible waste of money. If someone hasn't learnt how to have sex by the time they have turned 50 then a booklet is certainly not going to help."

However a representative of patient group LINK said the guide could help with health problems.

"Some of us do foolish things and might not feel entirely at ease if we're the oldest person in the sexual health clinic," he said.

A JAPANESE airline is doing its bit for the incontinent, by encouraging everyone to make sure they have empty bladders before boarding their planes.

All Nippon Airways says the move is part of an experiment to reduce aircraft weight and so cut down on carbon dioxide emissions.

The one-month trial began yesterday on 42 international and domestic flights, with special staff placed near boarding gates to ask passengers waiting for flights to go to the toilet.

THE University of Florida in the USA is well and truly prepared for any eventuality, including epidemics of disease, hurricanes and even attacks by cannibalistic zombies.

An emergency plan published on the university's website this week details plans to deal with health pandemics, severe weather, floods and attacks by "flesh-eating, apparently life impaired individuals".

An outbreak of zombies may be accompanied by "documentation of lots of strange moaning," the site warns.

A spokesperson for the university said the zombie plan was created by an employee to "add a little bit of levity" to disaster preparation discussions.