

Pharmacist in hot water

THE former president of the Connecticut Pharmaceutical Association in the USA Roy Kratz, has been found guilty of massive Medicare fraud.

Kratz defrauded the US Medicare agency of around US\$3.2 million by charging bogus prescription fees his former place of employment, RG Pharmacy.

Kratz copped a two year suspended sentence and avoided harsher penalties by cutting a plea bargain, which stipulated that he pay US\$1 million back to Medicare, and his former pharmacy (which changed hands last year) would pay back US\$1.15m.

Kratz and RG Pharmacy have also been prohibited from participating in any government health-care programs for a period of at least seven years.

Parkinsons vaccine

CLINICAL trials of a possible Parkinson's Disease vaccine called PD01, are set to kick off soon after positive pre-trial results confirmed the agent's "proof of concept".

The vaccine is designed to work by acting against the alpha-synuclein (alpha-syn) protein deposits in the brain, which are a key contributing factor in the progression of Parkinson's.

According to AFFIRiS AG, creators of the vaccine, the pre-trials showed that the vaccine triggered an immune system response which worked to deplete alpha-synuclein reserves.

"Alpha-syn is an attractive target for treating Parkinson's causally and not just symptomatically," said Dr Frank Mattner.

The PD01 clinical trials are now slated to commence in early 2011.

Somac goes off patent

AS of 01 April Somac (pantoprazole) 20mg and 40mg tablets and granules come off patent and will be available to patients without their brand price premium.

Designed for the treatment of and gastric ulcers, reflux oesophagitis and Zollinger-Ellison syndrome, from 01 Apr Somac will be available on the PBS at the same price as its pantoprazole generic substitute; \$31.97 for non-concession card holders and \$5.40 for concession card holders.

Sigma shares plummet 43%

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals has reinstated trading in its shares on the stock exchange, with the price plunging 43% to just 51c in less than two hours.

As foreshadowed earlier this week (PD Mon) the company finally released its long-awaited annual results for the year to 31 Jan, with a \$389m loss "due to impairment of goodwill".

Sigma says its underlying business is sound, with sales revenue up 4.5% to \$3.22 billion - but the underlying profit of \$67.7.2m (before the massive goodwill write-down) is still down 15% on last year's \$80.1m figure.

The company said it had breached interest cover and other borrowing covenants, but talks with banks have seen these breaches waived "and the facilities have been renegotiated within a short space of time with appropriately reset covenants".

"Sigma is confident of the continued sound operations and

underlying profitability of the company," said managing director Elmo de Alwis.

He said Sigma had a "unique vertically integrated and diversified business model with leading market positions in generics, over-the-counter and consumer, medical, manufacturing, wholesale and retail banners".

The writedowns significantly affected the generics market, with de Alwis saying increased discounting and a delay in the launch of a product due to legal action had "led to a forecast in future cash flows for the business."

However Sigma remains committed to sustaining and growing its position in the Australian generics market, he said.

De Alwis said the Herron consumer business had performed well in the pharmacy channel but "continues to face challenges in the grocery distribution channel."

The company is anticipating that its net profit after tax next year will return to around the \$80m level reported last year.

Keeping it community

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has welcomed Tony Abbott's stance of keeping pharmacy out of the realm of supermarkets.

"I kept Coles and Woolworths out of pharmacy, for instance, not because I questioned their ability to manage dispensaries but because I doubted that replacing family oriented small businesses with the departments of large businesses would improve anything except price," Abbott said.

"From study and experience, I have come to appreciate that "do no harm" should be the first rule of government as well as the foundation of medical ethics," he added.

In light of Abbott's comments the Guild reiterated its position that the Australian model of community pharmacy does work, and that its role in 'medicines and professional advice continues to evolve and respond to changes and reforms in the Australian health system.

"Pharmacists remain the most accessible of health professionals in Australia, and that is a benefit worth keeping," said Pharmacy Guild national president, Kos Sclavos.

NZ pharmacist bust

A PHARMACIST, Julian Price, in the NZ region of Te Anu, has been charged with professional misconduct after breaching several production, packaging and distribution of medicines rules.

Price was originally reported in 2007 by customers and fellow staffers for selling paracetamol tablets with no expiry dates or batch numbers, as well as making and packaging nasal sprays, lozenges and injections at his home- with the help of an unqualified assistant.

A subsequent surprise inspection of Price's pharmacy found that he had a contract with AMI for the production of their erectile dysfunction treatments.

When questioned by inspectors Price's assistant said he used the colour of liquids to differentiate which was the erection spray and which was the antidote, when pouring and packaging.

Inspectors also discovered that when the injection or nasal spray liquid components were spilled they would often be scraped off the bench and reloaded.

As a result of the findings Price has been suspended from practising for a two year period.

NEON BRIGHTS NAIL POLISH UP FOR GRABS



Every day this week, **Pharmacy Daily** is giving readers the chance to win 1 nail polish from the latest Neon Brights range, courtesy of Total Beauty Network.

Exclusive to the Designer Brands Nail Care range is Neon Brights, a kaleidoscope of the hottest neon colours that are chip & fade-proof, quick drying and long lasting! Get a professional finish with the

exclusively designed brush for the perfect application.

For your chance to win a Neon Brights nail polish this week, simply send through the correct answer to the daily question below:

Neon Brights is described as
a of colours

Send entry to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

The first correct entry received each day will win.

Hint! Visit www.tbn.com.au.

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner: **Belinda Morris** from **AFS Dispensaries**. The correct answer was: 'Midnight Blue and Blue Belle'.



Health, Beauty and New Products

Welcome to our weekly feature with all the latest health, beauty and new products for pharmacy!

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au.

Let Bees repair your hands

Burt's Bees has launched a brand new 'Shea Butter Hand Repair Cream' for dry hands, nails and cuticles. Sporting a rich buttery texture, the cream is blended from shea butter infused with sunflower oil and glycerin, and macadamia, rosehip, neroli and borage oils. The cream works to soften skin whilst also creating a protective barrier. It can be used to replenish moisture after hand washing, or with thicker application and cotton gloves as an overnight hand treatment mask.

RRP: \$29.95

Stockist: Burt's Bees, 1300 855 478



Soothe and Smoothe away dry autumn lips



Created from a range of moisturising and moisture locking agents including jojoba, sunflower oil and shea butter, Blistex's newest SPF30+ soft gel lip conditioner has two surprises up its sleeve. Firstly the pliant ridges on the applicator tip, which have been designed to 'invigorate lips' whilst also massaging the conditioner below the surface skin. The second surprise is its delivery system, which, unlike other soft gel conditioners, is a hard and durable stick container that dispenses a small amount of the gel with one twist.

RRP: \$4.95

Stockist: Key Pharmaceuticals, 1800 653 373

Create Instant Radiance!

A'kin's new Multi-Fruit & Willow Bark Instant Radiance Facial Masque helps to enhance the skin's natural surface renewal process via its blended combination of AHA's including Bilberry Fruit and Willow Bark extracts. The addition of hyaluronic acid boosts skin hydration, vitamin B3 promotes a healthy glow, and pomegranate and echium oil fight free radicals and provide skin with an external source of Omega 3, 6 & 9 fatty oils.

RRP: \$29.95 (50ml)

Stockist: The Purist Company, 1800 631 283



New Taylored Mother's Day gift packs!



Single flower fragrance brand, Taylor of London, has released a series of beautifully presented and affordable Mother's Day gift packs. Available in 'Calming Lavender', 'Elegant Rose', 'White Lily of the Valley' and 'Delicate Freesia', the packs feature a variety of hand and nail, bath and body and pure fragrance products. The major selling point of the packs is their lovely delicate and lingering product scents, as well as the convenience they offer.

RRP: \$14.95 - \$29.95

Stockist: (02) 8709 8800

Natural skin care solutions

Gaia has enhanced its body care range with two new soap and sulfate free body washes. Containing moisturising avocado oil, circulation boosting ginkgo biloba and skin refining agent ginseng, the new body washes are available in two scents 'Pink Grapefruit & Jasmine' and 'Lavender & Frankincense'. The washes are gentle enough for everyday use and can be added to bath water. Scent matching moisturisers are also available to complement the washes. The new moisturisers contain dimple reducing rosehip and wheat germ oils as well as calendula to soothe and replenish skin's moisture.

RRP: \$14.95 (250ml)

Stockist: Gaia, (03) 9703 1707



DISPENSARY CORNER

SOME mothers do 'ave 'em.

A 30-year old woman in the US has been sentenced to 180-days in jail and three years probation for having used fraudulent means to obtain a brand new set of breasts.

So desperate was the woman to have the latest and greatest in breast surgery enhancement that she obtained a line of credit in another person's name and scored \$12,000.

The Orange County resident now sports a brand new police record for burglary, grand theft and identity theft....oh and a shiny new set of silicone- which according to reports, she gets to keep.

NOW there's new wife, a whole new list of medications is needed.

A 96-year old Taoist temple keeper and father of two, Lin Chung, finally took the plunge this month and settled down.

At a sprightly 93 years of age, Chung began his quest for a future bride and found her soon after in the form of a 30 year old woman from the central province of Hunan.

The move to marry caused much consternation with Chung's 68-year old adopted son, who raised objections because he thought his father was being conned.

Not one to be deterred Chung marched his bride to the altar and married her, and is now awaiting governmental permission to relocate his wife to Taiwan with him. **IF** you squint really hard you can see the resemblance.

A motherly poodle in the US has taken a brood of baby squirrels under her proverbial wing, after a chainsaw demolished their home.

Having just recently seen off her last 8-week old pup, the poodle, Pixie, had not quite had enough of motherhood, and accepted the squirrels as her own, even producing milk to feed them with.

