



Mountaintop POS
For years the best Pharmacy POS
Now with REG - Our No Cost POS
Call 1800 500 597 for details
www.mtntop.com.au

Mountaintop Systems

Roxon asks for report on Soliris

AGITATION by a patient group suffering from paroxysmal nocturnal haemoglobinuria (**PD** yesterday) has prompted Health Minister Nicola Roxon to make an "urgent request for further advice" from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Committee on the potential benefits of adding Soliris (eculizumab) to the Government's Life Saving Drugs Program (LSDP).

She said the PBAC had recommended that Soliris be considered for inclusion in the LSDP but had also cited doubts on the extent to which the drug - one of the world's most expensive medications - extends life compared to best supportive care.

"It is a condition of funding drugs under the LSDP that there must be evidence acceptable to the PBAC to predict that a patient's lifespan will be substantially extended as a direct consequence of the use of the drug," Roxon said.

She added that the Government understands that the matter is important and has asked the PBAC to reconsider Soliris as quickly as possible for potential subsidy - with the PBAC set to ask the drug's sponsor, Cedarglen Investments, if any new evidence has become available as to its effectiveness.

An estimated 75 Australians suffer from the extremely rare blood disorder treated with Soliris.

15c eScript payment

A NUMBER of *Pharmacy Daily* readers have asked us to point out that the 15c per prescription payment to pharmacists under the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement (**PD** 04 May) will only partly offset the costs charged by the providers of the electronic prescription exchanges, which are set to charge about 25c per script.



Find us on
Facebook

PSA launches issues paper

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia is encouraging all sectors of the pharmacy industry to take part in a consultation process launched today to help shape the future of pharmacy in Australia.

The PSA has released an *Issues Paper on the Future of Pharmacy* as a first step, which is hoped to lead to a White Paper for the Pharmacy Profession next year, endorsed by all stakeholders.

PSA National President Warwick Plunkett told **PD** yesterday the changing demographics in Australia and the government's focus on primary care and health reform are likely to "present challenges to the roles played by pharmacists and other health professionals."

The recent signing of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement gives some breathing space for all parts of pharmacy to have input into the process, Plunkett said.

The PSA paper aims to kick off the process, giving an overview of the current status of pharmacy in Australia and hoping to stimulate debate on the challenges and opportunities for the profession in coming years.

"Some of the issues we will need to examine are change and change management, remuneration, the workforce and health reform processes, to name but a few.

"The changes and challenges for pharmacy are not unique to Australia, and other countries have similarly sought to establish a vision for the future of pharmacy which will undoubtedly have some lessons for the Australian experience," Plunkett said, referring in particular to similar profession-wide processes undergone in the UK and Canada.

The issues paper looks at the future viability of pharmacy, possible alternative remuneration models, integration of hospital and community pharmacy services and the pharmacy workforce.

The paper is now online, and it's hoped that groups such as the Guild, SHPA and other parts of the profession will also contribute ideas.

The consultation is likely to be the focus of part of the PSA's Pharmacy Australia Congress to be held in Melbourne at the end of October.

[Click here for PSA issues paper](#)



ABOVE: PSA's National President Warwick Plunkett and Director John Jackson with the new issues paper in Sydney yesterday.

Sigma now a target

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals today said that it had received a "non-binding, indicative and conditional proposal" to acquire all of its issued capital (**PD** breaking news).

The proposed deal, from an unnamed suitor, quotes a price of \$0.60 per share - almost twice the current level of around 35c, where Sigma is languishing following its profit downgrade and the resignation of key executives and board members incl former ceo Elmo de Alwis.

Sigma's board advised shareholders to take no action on the bid at this stage.

Bishop to open NMS

AUSTRALIA'S Chief Medical Officer, Professor Jim Bishop, will officially open the NPS' National Medicines Symposium next Wed.

The theme of NMS2010 is *Medicines in People's Lives*, with the biennial event this year aiming to "transcend health industry silos" and provide front line healthcare workers the opportunity to share expertise, experience and opinion.

The event will address medicines use issues in the wider context of the massive changes in the health system, including the various reforms and new prescribers.

More info www.nms2010.org.au.

COPD prevalence

ABOUT six million people in Australia suffered from chronic respiratory diseases in 2004-05, according to a report released yesterday by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

A third of those were afflicted with asthma - including 16% of Indigenous Australians, while 3.2 million were affected by hayfever and 1.8m had chronic sinusitis.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease affected almost 600,000 Australians, while diseases of the respiratory system were the third most common underlying cause of death in 2006.

pharmacy
expo2010

the premier pharmacy practice event

HAVE YOU REGISTERED?

Pharmacy Expo combines a FREE trade exhibition, alongside a first-rate education program. Visit the website to review the education program, speaker and program overview, new product listing, show specials and more. The education program is filling fast, with some topics on Friday already SOLD out. Register online now for 3 days of networking, education and innovation in pharmacy.

www.pharmacyexpo.com.au



Darling Harbour • Friday 4 - Sunday 6 June 2010



Accounting

Legal

Financing

Investments

Stay across it all with advice that matters.

Guild

CPD Calendar

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

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

26 May: PSA ACT 'Pharmacy Horizons: Career Options for Pharmacists'; 7pm - 10pm - lillian.lesueur@psa.org.au.

26-28 May: The NPS's National Medicines Symposium 2010, Melbourne Conference and Exhibition Centre - www.nms2010.org.au.

29-31 May: The AACCP's annual ConPharm clinical seminar at The Grand Chancellor Hotel in Hobart - details www.aacp.com.au.

04-06 Jun: Pharmacy Expo in Sydney - earn up to 20 CPD points in 3 days. More info www.pharmacyexpo.com.au.

16 Jun: Law and Ethics in Pharmacy Workshop, University of Sydney Faculty of Pharmacy - www.pharm.usyd.edu.au/aapae.

23 Jun: Australia's Health 2010 Conference and Report Launch, Canberra National Convention Centre - conference@aihw.gov.au.

28 Jul, 30 Jul: One day intensive conference on Pharmaceutical Law - Melbourne (28th) and Sydney (30th) - 02 9224 6011.

28 Aug-02 Sep: 70th FIP World Congress, Lisbon, Portugal - www.fip.org/lisbon2010.

11-12 Sep: Australasian Conference for Compounding Pharmacists - www.accp.net.au.

15-18 Sep: Pharmacy 2010, the Pharmacy Management Conference on Hamilton Island - www.pharmacyconference.com.au.

28-31 Oct: PSA's Pharmacy Australia Congress in Melbourne - details www.pac10.com.au.

11-14 Nov: The 36th National SHPA Conference, Medicines Management 2010 in Melbourne - mm2010shpa.com.

01-10 May 2011: The PSA's 2011 Offshore Conference in Venice, Italy and Salzburg, Austria - expressions of interest at www.psa.org.au.

Eli Lilly invests \$50m in Qld

MEDICINES Australia says the investment by pharmaceutical manufacturer Eli Lilly of \$50m in a Queensland biotechnology venture capital fund is an endorsement of the new Memorandum of Understanding signed between drugmakers and the govt before the Federal Budget (**PD** 05 May).

MA ceo Brendan Shaw said "This is exactly the sort of investment that having a strong innovative pharmaceutical industry located in Australia leads to.

"The predictability provided by the MoU provides the platform for pharmaceutical companies to plan their operations in Australia, and that includes their investment decisions," Shaw said.

The Brisbane-based fund will also attract a \$25m investment from the Queensland government, with state premier Anna Bligh saying it will fund the development of biotechnology ideas.

"Lack of access to venture capital has been one of the missing links in the development of the bio-tech industry in Australia," she said.

"This fund will fill that gap. It is a huge opportunity to drive investment in this new area of the economy," Bligh added.

The fund aims to help biotechnology companies commercialise their technology, with plans to "make Queensland a key biotechnology hub in the Asia Pacific Region," the Premier said.

UK shortages

THE Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain says many of its members believe that medicine shortages in the UK have become worse in the last few months, with pharmacists "continuing to dedicate precious time trying to obtain medicines for patients, when they could be spending it on direct patient care".



DISPENSARY CORNER

THE guitarist in a German rock band has learnt a hard lesson after not being able to see straight for some days after taking too many Viagra pills.

20-year-old Tom Kaulitz from popular group Tokio Hotel said he was offered one of the blue tablets during a concert tour of Asia, and after first declining eventually decided to try one.

And then "I popped a few more pills - probably too many," he said.

"The next morning my head was pounding and everything in front of my eyes was blurry. It wasn't fun any more," he added.

Luckily he didn't incur any sort of penalty for the drug abuse, which in some jurisdictions could result in a stiff sentence...

AND while we're on the subject, a veterinarian in New York has prescribed two Viagra pills per day for an ailing pit bull terrier.

The six-year-old canine suffers from heartworms, meaning she requires two 50mg Viagras each day to boost blood flow and prevent heart failure.

The dog lives in an animal rescue shelter which is now short of funding, and so is asking any generous male benefactors to donate any of their own Viagra which they're not taking.

Interestingly, one donation of Viagra came from a woman who pinched her husband's entire stash of the medication because she suspected he was having an extramarital affair.

THE environmental movement has spread to the funeral industry, with the creation of the ultimate eco-friendly, low carbon footprint way to go.

Swedish biologist Susanne Wiigh-Masak has developed a technique called "promession" which involves the use of liquid nitrogen to super-freeze a corpse - which is then shaken until it disintegrates into a pile of dust.

She said the crystallised body particles can then be buried in a bio-degradable container "to nourish the growth of a plant or tree in a memorial park".

WANT YOUR SKIN TO LOOK FLAWLESS?



This week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving readers the chance to win a Natural Ground Minerals product, courtesy of **Total Beauty Network**.

100% Naturally Organic, with an in-built no waste grinder so make-up is protected from light, air and bacteria. It also contains ingredients that care for your skin such as Poly Peptides & Pomegranate. Apart from a foundation there is a bronzer to give healthy, natural sun-kissed glow and a finishing Illuminator to set your make-up for an all day fresh finish. No nasties, no fuss application and suitable for even the

most sensitive skin.

For a chance to win your very own Natural Ground Minerals product, simply send through the correct answer to the daily question below:

Name 5 ingredients not included in Natural Ground Minerals

Email your answer to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

The first correct entry received will win!

Hint: Visit: www.tbn.com.au.

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner: **Jae Yeo** from **Medicare Australia**. The correct answer was: pure minerals, natural ingredients and organic materials.