

Guild Update

This week's update
from the Guild

myCPD.org.au

THE Guild is helping pharmacists to comply with the Pharmacy Board of Australia's (PBA) requirements for mandatory continuing professional development (CPD) as a condition of registration.

As part of this national registration requirement, all pharmacists will need to keep records of their continuing professional development. The Guild has developed www.myCPD.org.au – an easy to use website that any pharmacist can use to keep track of their CPD credits.

The site will also provide the portal for enrolling in the growing list of e-learning opportunities that the Guild has to offer. There is already a range of free accredited CPD activities that can be undertaken, including:

- Good Pharma
- Pandemic Preparedness: Infection Control and Business Continuity Planning
- Mirixa

Those logging on will have the opportunity to select from an existing menu of courses as well as adding in their own details.

Stage 2 which is due early in 2011, will provide an extended range of options. The site also includes a calendar of CPD eligible events for each State and Territory.

The Guild is now also authorised by the Australian Pharmacy Council to accredit providers of CPD activities for pharmacists that may be used as supporting evidence of continuing competence. Education or training providers who wish to have a CPD activity accredited should email accredit.cpd@guild.org.au or contact Andrew Matthews on 02 6270 1888.



**The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia**

Pharmacists key to PHA

THE Australian Self-Medication Industry has welcomed a government decision this week to proceed with legislation to establish the new national Preventive Health Agency (PHA).

ASMI executive director, Dr Deon Schoombie, said that pharmacists were expected to play a vital role in the roll-out of community-wide preventative health programs, which are likely to be established by the new organisation.

The PHA was one of the key recommendations of the govt's Preventative Health Taskforce, "and represents an important step in delivering improved health outcomes for all Australians," Schoombie said.

"We saw a considerable amount of work by the Preventative Health Taskforce examining the benefits of a stronger focus on strategies to improve health and fitness across the community.

"We fully endorse the Taskforce's position that there will need to be stronger partnerships between government, non-government

Sevikar on PBS

FROM 1st November a new hypertensive combination will become available on the PBS - MSD's Sevikar, which brings together olmesartan medoxomil and amlodipine into a single medication.

The product is described as an effective new combination option for blood pressure control, with the convenience of a single daily dose.

The ease of administration is expected to improve patient compliance, in the face of "key adherence challenges".

19% of people starting on blood pressure medication do not fill a second prescription, with just 44% persisting in the long term.

And up to 75% of hypertension patients will require more than one medication, so the single tablet option is much more convenient.

"Pharmacists have a front line role in facilitating concordance with hypertension medication," said Dr Sasha Bennett of the University of Sydney and consultant pharmacist to St Vincent's Hospital Cardiac Rehabilitation Program.

Sevikar is available in various formulations including 20mg/5mg, 40mg/5mg and 40mg/10mg.

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Kinerit withdrawal

THE Health Department has announced the withdrawal of biological disease modifying anti-rheumatic drug anakinra (Kineret) from the PBS effective 01 Dec.

The move follows a recent recommendation by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee for a "significant price reduction" for all drugs of this type for treatment of severe active rheumatoid arthritis, following a review of the clinical and cost-effectiveness of the medications.

A new subsidy price has been agreed between the govt and sponsors; however the sponsor of Kineret, Invida Australia Pty Ltd, has not agreed to the new price.

"As a result it will be removed from the PBS from 1 December 2010. This date has been chosen to give patients sufficient time to transition to other PBS subsidised treatments," the department said.

Currently there are five other bDMARDs subsidised by the PBS for the condition - abatacept (Orencia), adalimumab (Humira), etanercept (Enbrel), infliximab (Remicade) and rituximab (Mabthera).

A further three bDMARDs for rheumatoid arthritis are also subsidised - certolizumab pegol (Cimzia), golimumab (Simponi) and tocilizumab (Actemra).

PBS prescriptions for Kineret will remain valid until 30 Nov, with patients currently receiving the medication advised to contact their prescriber "to discuss alternative subsidised treatment options".

Pharmacy E-Bulletin

THIS week's edition of the RGH Pharmacy E-Bulletin deals with aspirin interactions and cautionary labelling - download free at auspharmlist.net.au/ebulletin.php.

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NPS on hypertension

NPS has launched a new *Treating Hypertension* education program, which encourages prescribers to assess absolute cardiovascular risk in all patients with uncomplicated hypertension, and "consider holistic treatment options that centre on lifestyle changes".

The program encourages health professionals to emphasise the improvement in blood pressure readings achievable through lifestyle changes, so patients may not need to start an antihypertensive, delay starting or reduce the number of drugs required to control blood pressure.

In particular newly diagnosed with mild or moderate hypertension and a moderate or low risk of having a cardiovascular event in the next five years should be encouraged to make or intensify lifestyle changes, said NPS ceo Dr Lynn Weekes.

Prescribers are also being warned to be alert for medication non-compliance among patients.

Sigma avoids GMiA scrutiny

THE long-running potential purchase of the generics division of Sigma Pharmaceuticals has been cited as the reason for the rejection of a complaint against the firm under the draft Generic Medicines Industry Association code.

La Trobe University academic Dr Ken Harvey brought the formal complaint against Sigma under the new GMiA Code in April, raising concerns about the Sigma Rewards loyalty program.

Harvey said that initially GMiA delayed hearing the complaint, because the organisation was awaiting authorisation of the proposed Code of Conduct.

Subsequent to this the Code was granted draft authorisation - but with the ACCC adding conditions requiring the disclosure of incentives provided to pharmacists.

In a letter to the ACCC this week Harvey said that the GMiA then said a further delay to hearing the complaint would apply because of

the mooted sale of the Sigma generics business - with the complaint eventually rejected on the same grounds.

In August Sigma announced it had agreed in principle to the sale of the pharmaceutical division to Aspen, but the deal has not yet been concluded, with an already extended exclusivity period between the companies set to expire this Fri.

Harvey's letter to the ACCC urges it to "take this matter into account when finalising the decision on conditions to be imposed on the GMiA application for Code authorisation.

"It is my view that complaints about industry behaviour should deal with the behaviour complained about and not be rejected because the company concerned may change in the future," he wrote.

In his letter he also urged that the government continue to pursue its desire for a 'level playing field' between all industry groups, suggesting that all of the various Codes of Conduct be submitted to the ACCC for authorisation on a regular basis.

Harvey also reminded the ACCC about last year's controversy regarding Sigma's Mediterranean educational cruise, which was the subject of a complaint against the firm under the Medicines Australia Code of Conduct.

At that time Sigma argued that it wasn't subject to the provisions of the code because it wasn't a member of Medicines Australia - and there was then no GMiA code of conduct under which the complaint could be registered.

Contraceptive gel

WOMEN may be offered an alternative to the birth control pill, after initial success of a trial of a new contraceptive gel applied once a day to the skin.

Containing oestrogen and a type of progesterone, the Nestorone Gel has been shown to be effective and well-tolerated in early studies - with less side effects than seen with oral contraceptives such as weight gain and acne.

However more trials need to be done before the product is likely to be commercially released.



DISPENSARY CORNER

A GROUP of birds in the NZ capital of Wellington may be turning into nicotine addicts.

Staff at one of the city's primary health organisations this week discovered a nest lined with cigarette butts when their office was relocating.

According to spokesperson Judy Hutton - who ironically runs a stop smoking program - there have been significantly more cigarette butts on the city's streets since the introduction of a ban on smoking in bars and other indoors premises.

"It appears that the birds have even torn off the outside of the filters to use its softness to better effect," said a wildlife control officer, who added that the butts might have bad effect, particularly on the young chicks.

"These baby birds are born without any feathers, and its effect must be something like having its entire hairless body covered in nicotine patches".

FORMER US president Bill Clinton reportedly lost top secret nuclear launch codes due to a prolonged "senior moment" of memory lapse during his presidency, according to a new book released this week.

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Patterson, who served under Clinton as a key military advisor, claims that a special card, known as "the biscuit" containing the codes disappeared during 2000.

"He thought he just placed them upstairs," he wrote.

"We called upstairs, we started a search around the White House for the codes, and he finally confessed that he had in fact misplaced them.

"He couldn't recall when he had last seen them," he added.

Apparently the codes must be input into a control console by the President when he's launching a nuclear attack.

Commentary on the new book also raises earlier rumours that former president Jimmy Carter left the card in a suit which was sent to the dry cleaners.

WANT YOUR SKIN TO LOOK FLAWLESS?



This week Pharmacy Daily is giving readers the chance to win an Natural Ground Minerals Starter Kit.

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.

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The first correct entry received will win!

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Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner: Lyn Banner from National Pharmacies Adelaide.