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TGA website changes

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration will launch a new corporate website on 04 May.

The TGA said that over the next month it will provide information on the changes and how to transition from using the old website to the new one.

Global push on resistance

THE problem of anti-microbial resistance requires a collaborative response from leaders in government, science, economics, public policy and industry, according to Medicines Australia.

The comments come in support of the 2011 WHO World Health Day theme, anti-microbial resistance, which is aimed at bring attention to the loss of efficacy of antibiotics as bacteria evolve and mutate.

"The medicines industry shares the WHO's concerns about the global spread of anti-microbial resistance," said MA chief executive Dr Brendan Shaw.

"Without effective antibiotics, many complex medical interventions like chemotherapy, joint replacements and organ transplants would be very difficult or impossible," he added.

According to Shaw, in order to prevent and counter the emergence of resistant infections, governments need to work with pharmaceutical companies to create a new policy environment, as well as greater incentives for research into new antibiotics.

Medicines Australia has also backed a new paper by the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations which urges that medicines be prescribed and appropriately used, in conjunction with greater incentives for firms to invest in the infection area.

MEANWHILE NPS Australia has also backed WHO's theme, saying that Australians need to be Medicinewise with antibiotics this winter, or risk not having antibiotics that work in the future.

NPS cites recent AIHW figures which found that Australians are amongst the highest users of antibiotics in OECD countries, with 14% of all antibiotic drugs prescribed in 2009-10 for upper respiratory tract infections - or around 3 million scripts.

"While antibiotics are a key treatment for many infections, we should only use them when it's really necessary and not just in case," said NPS clinical adviser, Danielle Stowasser.

She also stressed the importance of taking the full course of antibiotics.

Revitanail pack \$29.95

THE price of Revitanail's Mother's Day gift set (**PD** yest) is \$29.95.



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Appeal applications

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has opened applications for funding from the Guild Members' Disaster Appeal (**PD** 03 Feb), which has raised almost \$450,000.

Much of the money came in during APP, with Guild member pharmacies which were worst hit by the natural disasters now invited to make applications for assistance.

They have just over a week to apply, with the closing date for applications being next Fri 15 Apr.

The application form can be downloaded by clicking below.

Disaster Appeal applications

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On the back of an extremely successful launch at APP, APHS Packaging is recruiting for passionate and committed pharmaceutical sales professionals, with a demonstrable track record in achieving results.

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Register your interest by contacting Peter Maloney,
0408 705 662 or peter.maloney@aphspackaging.com.au.

Abbott fires up on PBS changes

FEDERAL Opposition leader Tony Abbott says the PBS is under a "sneak attack from the Gillard government".

During a visit to Alphapharm's plant in Brisbane last Fri, Abbott said that the Cabinet approval process for all new drugs meant PBAC recommendations were being "simply ignored" by the govt.

He said this "revolutionary change" to only approve drugs with commensurate savings was changing the PBS from a "demand-driven program to a budget-limited program."

"Now sick people are not going to have access to the medicines they need...this is a very serious development for Australia's health system," Abbott added.

He was joined at the plant by shadow health minister Peter Dutton, who added that changes to the PBS were also an attack on companies like Alphapharm which "add an incredible amount to the industry and to our country."

"[If] we deny sick people and particularly older Australians and



pensioners the drugs that they need then we aren't going to keep life expectancy where it is in this country and we aren't going to get better health outcomes for sick Australians," Dutton said.

"So we will keep the pressure on the government and we will support the industry...we will support cheap medicines going to Australians who need them the most," he added.

Alphapharm ceo Dr Martin Cross, who's pictured above centre with Abbott and Dutton during the visit, said that government policy uncertainty was also affecting the export of pharmaceuticals, with plants like Alphapharm's requiring a lot of long term investment.

"The PBS is a national treasure, and the companies that provide the

medicines to the PBS are part of the state of both the health and the wealth of the nation and we really do need to make sure this continues".

Pictured at left is Tony Abbott during his inspection of the Alphapharm facility.



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Board to introduce exam appeals fee

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia has announced the introduction of a new "oral examination appeals fee", with candidates who lodge an appeal required to pay a \$150 fee for an internal or external review.

Application forms for the appeal are available from AHPRA staff at the conclusion of the candidate's examination review meeting.

The new fee is detailed in the minutes of the Board's latest meeting on 25 March, which have been published today.

At the meeting the Board also released the consultation paper on the list of required references for pharmacists (**PD Mon**) which proposes the removal of Martindale among other changes.

An increasing workload of the Board's Registration and Notifications Committee has seen a restructure, with notifications to be considered by the Notifications Committee from next month.

Registration matters will in turn be considered by the Registration and Examinations Committee.

The Finance and Governance Committee of the Board reported on the development of the 2011/12 budget, which will feed into registration fees.

The Board said it would advise the profession of registration fees for next year "in due course".

Nicabate P unavailable

AUSTRALIAN GPs have been asked to stop writing prescriptions for Nicabate P for the next 12 weeks, after a major fire at a GSK packaging plant in the UK.

GSK Consumer Healthcare md for Australia, Graham Read, said the company was anticipating receiving 40,000 Nicabate P units to meet current demand - but these have now been destroyed.

Recent supply difficulties for Nicabate P have seen GSK offer a temporary reimbursement arrangement for pharmacists, but this will now cease, the firm said.

Australia is a priority market for GSK and will be the first to receive new stocks of Nicabate P, with GSK also investigating a number of contingency plans to restore supply.

Pfizer UK recall

PFIZER has announced a UK recall of its Onsenal Capsules 400mg, due to an "inability to provide the efficacy data to confirm the clinical benefit" of the medication.

The UK Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use requires data on the drug's performance in post-approval studies for the indication 'familial adenomatous polyposis', but this has not been available due to slow recruitment for participants in the post-marketing trials.

WIN A SPOT ON PSA'S POST OFFSHORE REFRESHER CONFERENCE RIVER CRUISE



The **Pharmaceutical Society of Australia** is giving one lucky **PD** reader the chance to win a place on PSA's upcoming Post Offshore Refresher Conference Danube River Cruise.

This incredible prize includes a seven night cruise (14-23 May 2011) on the 5-star *MS Amadeus Diamond* (Haydn Deck) travelling from Budapest to Bucharest and including the Black Sea.

The prize includes all meals, sightseeing excursions, Bucharest transfer and attendance at the case study workshop sessions.

The prize winner will be able to add other elements of the Offshore Refresher Conference program in Venice, Salzburg and Vienna if they wish through PSA Travel.

For your chance to win this fantastic prize, simply send in your answer to the question below by COB on Wed 13th Apr:

In 50 words or less, tell us why you think learning at PSA's Offshore Refresher Conferences would be so much fun

Email your answer to:

comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

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New Sutent indication

THE TGA has extended the indication for Pfizer's Sutent (sunitinib malate) to include the treatment of unresectable, well-differentiated pancreatic neuroendocrine tumours (pancreatic-NETs).

It's just over a year since the TGA granted Sutent orphan status for pancreatic-NETs, which account for about 10% of all NET diagnoses each year.

The recommended Sutent dose for pancreatic-NETs is 37.5mg daily.

Travel Specials

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals which we're sure will be of interest to everyone in the pharmacy industry.

THINKING about skiing in Canada next year? Ski specialist Value Tours is offering up to 40% off accommodation and 28% off lift tickets on a seven night Canada package, staying at Whistler Town Plaza Condominiums, for bookings by 31 August and travel from 02 January-02 February 2012.

Priced from \$799pp the bargain earlybird package includes accom in a Studio room and a five day lift ticket - valuetours.com.au.

CLOSER to home, Qantas Holidays has accommodation and ticket packages for the Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs exhibition in Melbourne, when booked by 10 July for select dates from 09 April to 06 November.

A two night deal staying at the Ibis Melbourne Little Bourke and a general admission ticket starts from \$182 per person twin share. See qantasholidays.com.au.

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More time for TGA review

PARLIAMENTARY Secretary for Health and Ageing, Catherine King, has extended the reporting date for the panel conducting the Therapeutic Goods Administration Transparency Review until 30 June.

The panel was originally scheduled to hand down a report this month, but King said she was acceding to a request for an extension from panel chairman, Professor Denis Pearce.

King said the move would give the group more time to "consider all the input received in developing its report and associated recommendations".

She said the panel had received more than 100 submissions, with input also received during public meetings in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth earlier in the year.

A number of private consultations have also been conducted with different stakeholders across the country as part of the panel's deliberations, King said.

"This is a large number of

submissions and demonstrates the importance of, and interest in, the work of the TGA in regulating therapeutic goods," she said.

"The transparency of the TGA is important to get the right. Information about the TGA and its processes ...[making] an important contribution toward improving public health," King emphasised.

The review, announced last year (**PD** 16 Nov), aims to improve public knowledge of regulatory decision-making and to "enhance public understanding of the benefits and risks of therapeutic goods".

Thyroid cancer tick

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved the first drug for the treatment of medullary thyroid cancer.

Vandetanib is a daily tablet which has been approved for adult patients with metastatic thyroid cancer who are ineligible for surgery.

WIN A BLUE STRATOS PACK



This week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving 5 lucky readers the chance to win a fantastic male toiletries pack valued at \$30, courtesy of **Blue Stratos**.

Blue Stratos is one of the most famous masculine fragrances, a classic which features as a landmark Fougere fragrance in the industry 'bible' - developed in 1976.

The Fougere fragrance concept is based upon the interplay between lavender and oak moss. Not only is it a nice smelling body spray, Blue Stratos has also developed an Anti-Perspirant Deodorant that protects for 24hours, as well as good old deodorising Talc Powder. You'll smell fantastic with this range of men's bathroom products all designed to complement each other.

For your chance to win this great male toiletries pack simply be the first person to send in an answer to the daily question below:

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

Hint! Visit www.keysun.com.au

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Kristen Peck** from **APHS Calvary Healthcare Riverina, NSW**.

DISPENSARY CORNER

PLAYING with your food.

A German teenager is turning convention on its head after she trained her pet cow to show jump.

The training began when, Regina Mayer's parents refused to buy her a pony, leaving her no choice but to turn to her cow Luna.

The enterprising teen then sought some tips from Swiss cow trainer Anne Wiltafsky, whose life ambition is apparently to teach people that cows can do everything a horse can.

"Cows are unbelievably devoted to people they like," said Wiltafsky.

Under Wiltafsky's tutelage Mayer begun Luna's training by leading her on gentle walks, and cajoling her with pats and treats, before riding her with a saddle, and eventually training her to jump like a showhorse.

MICHAEL Jackson for better health.

Student at the Duping primary school in China are now performing daily Michael Jackson dance routines, as part of their health and exercise regime.

Around 700 students from across all grades assemble in the school's playground to get their daily dose of exercise, which once upon a time was somewhat more serene.

"We used to practice Tai Chi but the students said they wanted to do something more modern," said the school's principal Wan Lu.

"This is fun and it is also very good exercise for them," Wan added.

According to reports, the students favourite routine to rehearse is Jacko's robotic dance as featured in his 'Dangerous' videoclip (pictured below).

