

\$8.5m in rural funding

THE government has allocated \$8.5 million in funding for 42 projects to make it easier for people living in rural and remote areas to see a health professional closer to their home.

It's the latest round of funding in the National Rural and Remote Health Infrastructure Program.

Roundtable on PBS delays

INDUSTRY groups including the Australian Medical Association, Medicines Australia and the Generic Medicines Industry Association are set to face off with Health Minister Nicola Roxon and Finance Minister Penny Wong tomorrow, over the government's plans to indefinitely delay the listing of new medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

Participants will also include the Consumers Health Forum and other consumer groups, allowing the peak healthcare bodies to "reaffirm their strong opposition to Cabinet's decision and explain to the Minister

its impact on consumers, their families and their carers".

"The Government has ignored the advice of its own expert committee, which recommended that the new medicines and vaccines be made available to patients through the PBS," a Medicines Australia statement said.

"Health consumers, clinicians and the companies who have developed these medicines are owed a proper explanation."

Currently on the list of delayed medicines are treatments for lung disease, chronic pain, schizophrenia, enlarged prostate and a catch-up vaccine to prevent pneumococcal disease in young children.

"We are all aware that the Government has short-term budgetary imperatives and that it is important that the cost of our health system does not spiral out of our control," said Medicines Australia.

"But it is hard to believe that Australia's fiscal situation is so bad that we need to deny important medicines to sick people," the statement added.

Blackmores' workshops

BLACKMORES is hosting a series of three hour mineral therapy workshops for healthcare professionals throughout May.

The two hour Minerals and Medications workshops will be led Dr Pauline Roberts and Elizabeth d'Avigdor, and cover topics including interactions, depletions, contraindications, metabolism of minerals and clinical tips.

The workshops are priced at \$39.95 (professionals) and \$29.95 (students), inclusive of the presentation, dinner and materials.

Dates for the workshops are as follows: 03 May, Richmond, Vic; 04 May, Adelaide, SA; 10 May, Warriewood, NSW; 11 May, Brisbane, Qld; 18 May, Perth; 24 May, Sydney CBD, NSW and 25 May, Hobart, Tas.

For more details, or to book call Blackmores on 1800 151 493.

CHOICE anti-vax ads

NEWSPAPER advertisements last week from consumer group CHOICE have warned travellers not to visit their GP for vaccinations before they leave Australia because of the risk of overservicing.

Choice published a damning report earlier this month claiming that GPs gave unnecessary injections because they lacked experience in travel medicine, with the group instead advising people to go to specialist travel clinics.

The report cited case studies by the Travel Doctor Group - clinics that promote themselves to travellers - which quoted anecdotal evidence of overservicing by doctors.

"Vaccination prices may be slightly higher at travel clinics, but you're less likely to receive and pay for shots you don't need and more likely to get well-informed advice," according to the Choice document

Pneumococcal warning

THREE quarters of Australians have no knowledge of pneumococcal disease, according to a new 13 country survey.

A leading cause of meningitis, septicaemia, pneumonia, and otitis media in children, pneumococcal disease is responsible for around 11% of all deaths in children aged 1-59 months worldwide.

Coinciding with World Meningitis Day (24 April), the survey found that 61% of Aussie parents were unaware of the life threatening diseases associated with pneumococcal disease, whilst 78% do not feel their children are at risk of the disease.

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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.

CAPTAIN Cook Cruises is offering 25% off its two night Sydney Harbour Weekend Cruises on select dates between June and August.

The two night Wintersun Weekend Cruise is now priced from \$360 per person twin share, and includes accommodation, meals, on-board facilities and most shore excursions.

The deal is on sale until 26 August for travel on 17 June, 22 July and 26 August departures.

See www.captaincook.com.au.

VALUE Tours has a seven night package skiing in Chile, South America, staying at The Inca Lodge in Portillo, from \$349pp.

The deal includes return flights to Santiago out of Sydney, as well as accommodation, airport transfers in Chile, four meals daily and a seven day lift pass.

See www.valuetours.com.au.

BENTOURS is showcasing Russia, Scandinavia and the Baltics with a 19 day 'Fabulous Scandinavia and the Czar' tour from Copenhagen to Moscow.

The itinerary is priced from \$3850 per person, including accommodation, some meals, coach touring, tour escort and ferry and train tickets.

Other packages include the eight day Fjords of Norway tour priced from \$2836 per person twin share and the eight day Classical Baltics adventure which is priced from \$1074 per person.

See www.bentours.com.au.

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PBS growth under inflation

MEDICINES Australia has attributed a surge in pharmaceutical costs over the first three months of the year to the mechanics of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme safety net.

The March quarter increase was revealed in yesterday's Consumer Price Index figures, and according to Medicines Australia, has been created by a resetting of the PBS safety net at the start of the year.

"Today's CPI pharmaceutical price should be considered in the context of the December 2010 CPI, when pharmaceutical prices fell 6.2% per cent," said Medicines Australia chief executive, Dr Brendan Shaw.

He said the index fell in December because many patients reached the PBS safety net, adding that the March spike proves that "the safety net is working".

Shaw backed up his assertion by citing the latest Medicare data which showed that the PBS grew 2.8% in the year to March - less than the 3.3% inflation figure.

"This data shows the PBS is

actually going backwards in real terms," he said.

"Whatever concerns the Government has about health expenditure, the PBS is one area of spending that it knows is being well contained," Shaw added, with the figures sure to be cited in tomorrow's peak PBS meeting (p1).

Corum pays out \$766k

PHARMACY software supplier Corum Group has authorised a payment of \$766,327.44 to a company called Oliveprince Pty Ltd in settlement of a lawsuit brought by one of the company's former executive directors (PD 07 Apr).

Corum's board said it had concluded after receiving advice from Senior Counsel "that an appeal may not significantly affect the judgement" in the court case which was only belatedly revealed to investors after an adverse ruling against Corum.

Directors said that the resolution of the matter "will not adversely impact on the operations of Corum Group Limited".

WIN A NUTRI-SYNERGY PACK



This week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving three lucky readers the chance to win a great Nutri-Synergy pack valued at \$44.80, courtesy of **Plunkett Pharmaceuticals**.

Each pack includes NS-7 Dry Skin Moisturiser, NS Soap Free Wash, NS-5 Protective Hand Cream and NS-3 Lip Balm.

The Nutri-Synergy range includes washes, cleansers, moisturisers and treatments. Nutri-Synergy combines the best of science and nature to effectively treat dry, sensitive and problem skin. Naturally active ingredients and no harmful chemicals. Proudly Australian made and owned.

For your chance to win this great skin therapy pack, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the daily question below:

Name one of the natural moisturisers in NS-7 Dry Skin Moisturiser?

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

Hint! Visit www.nutrisynergy.com.au

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Jasmine Eisler** from **Bayer Australia, NSW**. The correct answer was Australia.

DISPENSARY CORNER

NEW market: detox in the UK

If a new UK poll is anything to go by, British pharmacists should start marketing detox kits for tired livers.

The poll revolved around Britons' ideas of their national characteristics and found that more than a quarter of English citizens believe that getting drunk is a "national trait".

Other traits believed to make one British include drinking tea, with 60% of Brits naming sipping tea as a national trait, whilst 40% said having a "stiff upper lip" mentality was also decidedly British.

Unsurprisingly, almost half of the Brits surveyed said that supporting the British Royal Family was a national trait.

SOMEONE get that man a patch.

Anti-smoking campaigners may shed a tear this week after learning of one Cuban man's attempt to create the world's largest cigar.

67-year old Jose Castelar is knee deep in tobacco this week, working sometimes eight hours a day carefully crafting a 70 metre stogie.

Castelar's efforts are all driven towards beating his own record which he scooped for creating a 43.38 metre cigar in 2009.

TEETH pay out big time.

Citizens of South Korea appear to be cashing in on the soaring price of gold by selling their fillings.

This month the price of gold topped US\$1,500, leading many people with gold filled teeth to reconsider the necessity of keeping their golden chompers.

According to a local South Korean gold dealer, Nam Seung-Woo, this month alone he has purchased gold filled teeth from at least one hundred people.

And it seems the tide isn't stopping any time soon, with Nam telling local media that at present he receives around 10 emailed pictured of gold filled teeth for an appraisal every day.