Psychosis services
THE Government has announced a $222.4m investment for the establishment of 16 new youth early psychosis services over the next five years.

Difficult cholesterol
ONE third of patients fail to reach recommended cholesterol levels, according to a new survey.

The survey looked at responses from 150 Australian GPs and found that 34% of their patients were not achieving recommended cholesterol targets.

Despite this only 57% of GPs said that they were very likely to prescribe second-line lipid lowering medications.

“In order to reach and maintain ideal targets we need to evaluate the strategies we have available which may include titrating dose, switching to another statin or using a combined therapy,” said research advisor, Dr Chrys Michaelides.

“By aiming for the right therapy and response first time this will help to minimise multiple time-consuming steps on the way to achieving required LDL-C reductions,” he added.

Interesting figures also revealed in the survey include the fact that 83% of GPs reported that patient compliance with dietary and lifestyle advice hindered their ability to get their high-risk patients to target.

Patient adherence was also cited as an issue for medications with 71% of GPs saying that patient adherence to lipid lowering therapies was a major problem.

The dawn of a new era
A RESHUFFLE of the Federal Government’s ranks has resulted in the replacement of Nicola Roxon as the Minister for Health and Ageing, with Tanya Plibersek MP.

Formerly the Minister for Human Services and the Minister for Social Inclusion, Plibersek’s appointment has been welcomed by the industry, with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia saying that “Plibersek brings to this portfolio experience and commitment which will be a strong foundation for the challenges and imperatives that this role presents”.

“Two of Ms Plibersek’s long-standing priorities are saving Medicare and ensuring accessible health care for all Australians – areas in which pharmacists play a critical but often under-utilised role,” said PSA National President, Grant Kardachi.

“I look forward to working with Ms Plibersek to help achieve these goals, as well as others which will improve the health outcomes of Australians and help to meet the Government’s health reform agenda commitments,” he added.

Speaking to media on her appointment, Plibersek said it was important that she focuses on securing and bedding down existing reforms ushered in during Roxon’s rein as Health Minister.

“We have a good set of health policies,” she said.

“I want to make sure they are delivered properly and on time,” she added.

Meanwhile the Generic Medicines Industry Association (GMIA), has urged Plibersek to work with the generics sector to help “return significant savings to the economy without cutting into the PBS”.

“Supporting the uptake of follow-on generic medicines in Australia provides a three way win for the patient, the taxpayer and the economy,” said GMIA CEO, Kate Lynch.

ASMI has also congratulated Plibersek, saying that it is “greatly looking forward to working closely with her” and that it is encouraged by the passion and hard work she has shown in her previous roles.

Other notable Cabinet changes include the appointment of Mark Butler as the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, as well as Greg Combet who has been appointed as the Minister for Industry and Innovation.

As for Roxon, she has been honoured by becoming Australia’s first female Attorney-General.

ACCC on whiteners
THE ACCC has negotiated recalls for a number of teeth whitening products with peroxide levels that exceed safe limits.

Recalls include: White My Bite products- White My Bite Sensitive, White My Bite Professional and White My Bite Advanced kits; as well as products from by WhiteSmile including DayWhite Teeth Whitening Gel, NiteWhite Teeth Whitening Gel, Sunshine Health Teeth Whitening Gel and Crest Teeth Whitening Strips.

Other recalls include DaVinci Elite’s DaVinci Elite tooth whitening pen and its DaVinci Elite take-home teeth whitening kit.

The ACCC has also said that other recalls are likely, and has advised all known suppliers of DIY teeth whitening kits that products containing concentrations of more than 6% hydrogen peroxide or more than 18% carbamide peroxide are unsafe.
Call to remove SOL listing

**PHARMACISTS** should be removed from the migration Skilled Occupations List (SOL) according to the National Council of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

“We have to focus on ensuring appropriate job opportunities for our burgeoning workforce,” said Guild President, Kos Sclavos.

According to the Guild, the number of pharmacy schools has more than doubled in the past decade from six to 18, and with current figures showing around 1,600 students graduate from these schools each year there is increasing strain on community pharmacies to find intern placements for all graduates.

To support Guild’s call, last week it lodged a submission to Skills Australia which seeks to have pharmacists removed from the SOL for 2012.

“In terms of employment, it is acknowledged that there is unevenness in the supply of pharmacists across urban, rural and regional areas of Australia,” the Guild said.

In its submission the Guild pointed to disparities between the remuneration rate differentials for metropolitan versus regional pharmacists giving the following statistics: NSW – 8.5% (i.e. pharmacists working in regional NSW earn 8.5% more than their metropolitan counterparts); Victoria 9.4% and Queensland 6.6%.

“As a result, greater financial pressures are felt by regional pharmacies, with such pressures being cited as one of the most common barrier to providing rural or regional placements for pharmacy interns,” the Guild said.

Rather than dealing with the issue by listing pharmacy on the SOL, the Guild urged that it should be addressed through rural pharmacy programs such as those contained in the SCPA, and through appropriate domestic pharmacy workforce planning.

“While it is true that there are more pharmacists per head of population in the major cities than in remote Australia, when appropriate positions with appropriate conditions are offered in rural and remote pharmacies, in my recent experience there is no difficulty in attracting suitable candidates,” said Guild NT Branch President, Terry Battalis.

**ESSENTIALLY INNOXA GIFT GIVING**

This week *Pharmacy Daily* is giving five lucky readers the chance to win 2 body packs, valued at $44.80, courtesy of Innoxa.

The prize Includes:

- **Nourish pack**: including Exhilarate mini hand cream 50ml. Restore mini hand cream 50ml, Enrich hand mini hand cream 50ml & Wooden nail brush. All packaged in a complimentary cylinder.
- **Enrich & Nourish pack**: including Enrich Shower Crème 350ml, Enrich Hand Cream 150ml & Shower Cap. All packaged in a reusable mesh bag.

To win, simply be the first person to send the correct answer to the daily question below to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au.

**Name the 2 gift packs included in the prize**


Congratulations to Janelle Quinn from The Pharmacy Guild of Australia, NSW who is yesterday’s lucky winner.

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**Front of food labelling**

A PLAN to force manufacturers to develop front of pack labelling for food has been approved by Ministers from all states and territories and New Zealand.

The plan will see a single front of pack system with easily-understandable information which could include the amounts of fat, sugar and salt in the food developed in the next 12 months.

Welcoming the decision South Australian Health Minister John Hill said, “The more information you give people about the foods they are eating, the easier it is for them to make healthy choices.”