

Call for standard review

PHARMACY schools accreditation and quality assurance requirements should be reviewed by the Australian Pharmacy Council, according to the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA).

"SHPA has long supported competency-based education and training for pharmacy support staff, pharmacy students, pharmacy interns and registered pharmacists," a SHPA statement said.

The society said the APC's current standards are based on a 2002 document from the UK which was recently replaced by the Indicative Syllabus for UK pharmacy degrees published last year by the newly instituted General Pharmaceutical Council.

In the light of this change, SHPA is urging the Australian Pharmacy Council to update its accreditation standards "to reflect the profession's expectations regarding pharmacy graduates".

NAPSA joins chorus

THE National Australian Pharmacy Students Association is supporting calls for a moratorium on new Australian pharmacy schools, saying that continued expansion is unsustainable.

"Until now, the growth experienced in tertiary institutions offering pharmacy courses has developed a more competitive course framework for pharmacy curricula," said National President Timothy Mizzi.

"However, the benefits of continued growth will be significantly mitigated due to graduate oversupply," he added.

Guild says APESMA wrong

ATTACKS launched on the Pharmacy Guild of Australia by the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers, Australia (**PD** last week) arise from the latter's misunderstanding of the Pharmacy Industry Award 2010 (PIA) according to the Guild.

The furore, which has been simmering over the last fortnight, began when APESMA accused community pharmacies of underpaying more than half of all Australia's supervised interns.

The Guild demanded a retraction from APESMA because of its statement, however this call fell on deaf ears, with APESMA striking back by accusing the Guild of "sticking its head in the sand".

"The reason APESMA has more pharmacy members than ever before is because pharmacists are sick of being paid illegally low rates of pay," the union group claimed.

Responding to the latest attack, the Guild said it did not condone any underpayment of wages.

"I would be concerned if the claims by APESMA are accurate," said Guild President Kos Sclavos.

"The Guild has produced a plethora of resources for our members to help them understand their obligations during what is a complex four years of transition to the modern award for our industry," he added.

The Guild also countered underpayment claims saying "the penalty rates published in the Pharmacy Industry Award are the final rates, which may not apply until 2014.



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Sanofi Brisbane boost

SANOFI Consumer Healthcare is set to expand its Brisbane based nutraceutical research, development, quality assurance and manufacturing operations, as part of a \$14.2m redevelopment project.

"The investment we are making in Brisbane is one part of our plan to help us to continue growing some of our most well known and trusted brands including Nature's Own, Cenovis, Bio-Organics and Ostelin," said Sanofi MD Australia New Zealand, Jean Monin.

The redevelopment project is set to include a product development centre complete with new research and development laboratories; a tablet coating facility; an entry point for the business into the development and manufacture of soft gels, and a café for employees.

Construction has already begun on the project, with completion scheduled by the end of 2012.

New PSA president

GRANT Kardachi has been elected to the role of President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia.

Kardachi, a South Australian pharmacist, joins the newly elected Board alongside new VP's Claire O'Reilly from NSW and Joe Demarte from Victoria, as well as Warwick Plunkett, John Jackson, Julie Stokes, Nerida Smith, Gabrielle Cooper, Luke Bereznicki and John Harvey.

"I look forward to continuing the drive to have pharmacists better recognised as primary health-care providers in the collaborative model towards which Australia is evolving," said Kardachi.

"For example, currently the Sunday penalty for pharmacist employees in NSW is 170 per cent and this is increasing to the final penalty of 200 per cent by 2014."

Impacts of PIA rates will vary from state to state, Sclavos said, adding that in Victoria and SA the PIA rates and penalties are very similar to the old award.

"The move towards national wage and penalty parity is under way," Sclavos added.

"Regardless of the business structure of the employer, pharmacist employees will have the same minimum protection in terms of legislated pay; legislated penalty regimes; allowances; overtime; and the span of ordinary hours.

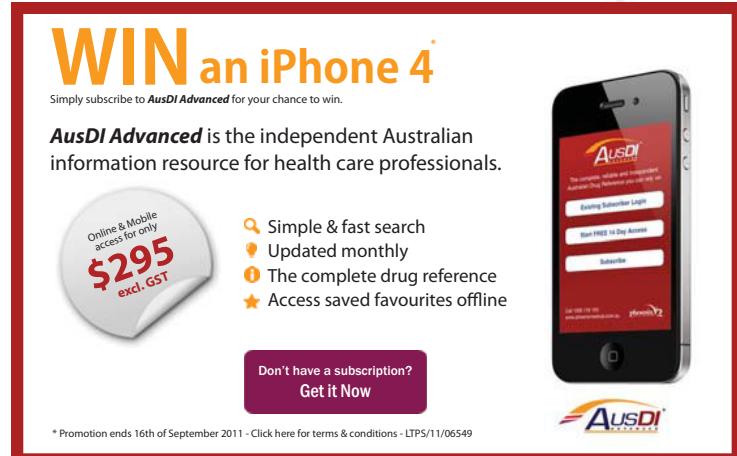
"While this will not be national until 2014 – with the exception of a few pharmacies in Western Australia – everyone is moving to the same end point," he added.

Interns who are concerned about their pay rates are being advised by the Guild to speak to their employer or to its workplace relations advisors - details at guild.org.au.

Aussie design award

AUSTRALIAN manufacturer UCB has been announced as a finalist in the Medical & Scientific category of the 2011 Australian International Design Awards for its development of the CIMZIA (certolizumab pegol) pre-filled purpose designed syringe for patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA).

The company said it worked with RA patients to understand the challenges of self-injection.



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Weekly Comment

Welcome to *Pharmacy Daily's* weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is **Frances Palmer**, Merchandise Manager of **PharmaSave Australia Pty Ltd.**

Catalogue Effectiveness

Catalogues are a key marketing tool for many retailers and the need to get them right is critical to making consumers come through your door.

Every week there are a wad of catalogues from many retailers that are passed through mail boxes across Australia and we need to make sure that ours are seen and read by our customers.

The use of colour to stand out amongst the masses of catalogues I think is very important and if your brand has special colours in its brand strategy then these should always be incorporated in the catalogue design.

Catalogues, due generally to their wide distribution, should reinforce brand positioning and customer expectations when they are in your retail pharmacy.

Catalogues should also be relevant (winter medicines in winter) to our target customers.

In preparing your catalogue make sure the quality of your images is up to your printers expectations, poor quality printing can make a large impact on consumer's desire to purchase products especially brands.

Catalogues need to convey simple messages (product and price) and we should always have our best offers on the front of the catalogue, not hidden in the middle where they might not be seen at all!

The pharmacy channel has products of special commerce (scheduled medicines, vitamins etc) that we need to follow the advertising guidelines as set down by TGA and state based pharmacy boards.

Make sure that your catalogues carry the correct warnings and consumer notifications regarding the use of these products.

Suppliers and wholesalers are very important to the successful execution of our promotions so great communications need to be a focus of anyone that is involved in the supply of product for the catalogues.

In summary catalogues are a great advertising medium for promotions and brand reinforcement.

Communications are of equal importance in the success of these promotional activities.

Price increases also blocked

IT'S not just new PBS listings which have been delayed due to the government's fiscal constraints - the Generic Medicines Industry Authority says it expects a "rash of delistings" unless health minister Nicola Roxon reverses a decision to indefinitely defer the implementation of Pharmaceutical Benefits Pricing Authority (PBPA) recommended price increases.

In its presentation to the Finance and Public Affairs Senate Reference Committee inquiry into the gov't's administration of the PBS, GMiA argued that in order to ensure patients have continued access to medicines, sponsors of PBS listed products must be confident that price increases for medicines will be granted when recommended by the pricing authority.

By way of example GMiA cited the first instance where one sponsor had to delist a product from the PBS due to an increase deferral.

According to GMiA, the unnamed sponsor successfully applied for a price increase to take effect on 15 March this year, but was informed a month after the increase was to

occur, that the price increase would not be implemented due to the deferral decision by the gov't.

Unfortunately, despite a subsequent surprise decision by the government to approve the sponsor's price increase on 21 June, the company was limited in how it could react to the backflip because it had already begun the process of delisting - which will take effect from 01 September.

"GMiA expects that further products will be delisted from the PBS as companies assess the ramifications of the Government's decision," a GMiA statement issued on Fri afternoon said.

"These Government policies are broad brushed policies that reduce the price of medicines without full consideration of the clinical need or commercial viability of the individual medicine" it said.

The PBPA review is an important 'safety valve' - providing sponsors the "opportunity to seek a price restoration for products that have a clinical need and are not commercially viable," the statement concluded.

Win a 1 year supply of Carmex® lip balms

Pharmacy Daily has teamed up with Carmex® lip balm this week and is giving five lucky readers the chance to win a one year supply of Carmex lip balms, just in time for winter.



Each pack contains:

- ✓ 2 x Carmex® lip balm jars
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How many Carmex products are available in Australia?

Hint! Visit www.mycarmex.com.au

DISPENSARY CORNER

FLYING high.

A Russian man, paralysed after a mountain climbing fall, has built his own outdoor lift, after waiting in vain for his local council to install one as promised.

According to reports, the disabled man bought his fifth floor flat six years ago, with a council promise to install a lift.

Deciding he did not want to wait for a seventh year, the man with the help of his friends constructed a winch which lifts him up the side of his building.

"I couldn't get in or out of the block without someone's help; it was like being in a prison," the man said of his previous situation.

"So I decided to sort it out myself," he added.

BALL baffles brilliant brains.

A massive ball of ice has members of the scientific community divided as to its origin.

Found by a group of mushroom pickers in the middle of a forest in the Czech Republic, the large ball of ice was surrounded by a pool of mud, which it presumably created by melting.

According to reports, there were no footprints around the ice, and no signs of how it came to rest in the middle of a forest.

Some are heralding the discovery as the world's largest hailstone, whilst other scientists have argued that it must be man-made because it is nearly impossible that it fell through the sky to the ground without breaking up.

"It would have weighed tonnes - how it was moved here without a lorry is a mystery," one local farmer told media.

Despite scientific skepticism the huge frigid ball is now attracting vast amounts of interest from across the globe by UFO spotters and alien enthusiasts.

