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## eHealth & compliance

A NEW study published in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine* has found that electronic record sharing between doctors and pharmacists can help identify patients who are not filling their prescriptions, and could ultimately lead to a greater understanding of why patients skip medications or don't even start taking them.

The 18 month study looked at 12,000 US patients with new prescriptions for either diabetes, cholesterol or blood pressure and whose prescriber was electronically linked with their pharmacy.

The research found that 7% of blood pressure patients did not pick up their medication, whilst 11% skipped filling diabetes medication scripts and 13% did not collect medications for cholesterol.

"Given that adherence to medications is directly associated with improved clinical outcomes, higher quality of life, and lower health care costs across many chronic conditions, it is important to examine why some people never start the medications their doctors prescribe," said study lead author Marsha Raebel, PharmD.

"Having electronic health record medication order entry linked to pharmacy dispensing information makes it much easier for clinicians and researchers to identify patients who are not getting their new prescriptions filled.

Knowing the figures for not getting scripts filled, she said the next step is to better understand what the barriers are to people picking up the medications they had been prescribed.

## Distribution battle continues

YESTERDAY 32,000 pharmacists, health professionals and patients made their voices heard in a House of Representatives petition against the Pfizer Direct exclusive distribution model (PD yesterday).

The petition calls on the govt to place a moratorium on exclusive supply arrangements and was presented to Darren Chester MP, Member for Gippsland by one of his constituents, Gippsland pharmacist Tim Shelton.

The move comes on the back of a Galaxy Research pharmacist survey which reported that the Pfizer model "is having a significant impact on the ability of pharmacists to meet the needs of their patients".

98% of pharmacists who responded said Pfizer Direct had altered their ability to meet the expectations of their patients, whilst 90% said that they had seen "a deterioration in the timely and reliable supply of medicines to their pharmacy".

Nine out of ten pharmacists also said that they had patients who had been inconvenienced or had their health and wellbeing impacted because of supply issues; with those in cities just as likely to report problems as their regional and rural counterparts.

Around half of pharmacists who experienced Pfizer supply problems



said that the issues weren't isolated, and that the health and wellbeing of patients is being compromised "on a weekly basis".

Reported solutions to supply issues included 82% of respondents contacting other local pharmacists to track down medicines, whilst 26% of pharmacists admitted that they have at times had to contact the prescribing doctor to request a different medicine or dose.

Around 87% said that they needed to order Pfizer stock, and advised the patient to come back in a few days time, whilst around two thirds said that they have had occasions where they have been simply unable to dispense the medicine required.

As a result of Pfizer's distribution decision 89% of pharmacists said that they would prefer a doctor to prescribe a non-Pfizer product if an alternative exists, whilst many said that they would be unlikely to support Pfizer's range of generics.

Pictured above is pharmacist Tim Shelton (left) presenting the petition to Darren Chester MP.

## LIVE registrations

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia is reminding pharmacists that registration is closing soon for its PharmacyLIVE! professional development event, which will take place 17-18 Sep in Sydney.

The PSA said the conference is one of the last opportunities to accrue mandatory CPD credits before registration renewals.

Register at [www.psa.org.au](http://www.psa.org.au).

## Diabetes Buzz Day

PHARMACISTS are being reminded that this Friday is national Diabetes Buzz Day, the signature fundraising event for Australian Diabetes Council.

For information on how to get involved, visit [www.buzzday.com.au](http://www.buzzday.com.au).

## 28,000 tissues for cancer

IN just under a fortnight since its launch, Blue September's Facing up to cancer in men' campaign (PD 05 Sep) has already raised thousands of dollars for the cause.

According to Symbion, 28,000 packs of the pharmacy-only Quilton toilet tissues have already been sold, with \$2 from every pack donated to the cause.

Pharmacy groups involved in the initiative include Terry White, Chemmart, Pharmacy Choice, Soul Pattinson, Pharmacist Advice, Guardian, Amcal, Amcal Max, Chemist Warehouse, My Chemist, Blooms, Tomeo & Laslett, Optimal Pharmacy Services and Greg's Discount Chemist.

For details on how to participate contact your wholesaler or visit the Guild website [www.guild.org.au](http://www.guild.org.au).

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### Guild Update

This week's update from the Pharmacy Guild

## HMR changes

**NEXT** month will see significant changes to the Home Medicines Review (HMR) Program aimed at making sure the right person gets the right service at the right time, based on their clinical need.

The changes that come into effect on 1 October will:

- Highlight the importance of the patient's clinical needs at time of referral.
- Empower the patient to choose the most appropriate pharmacist to interview them at home.
- Enable the GP to refer to either the patient's preferred community pharmacy or an accredited pharmacist of the patient's choice.

The changes have a strong patient focus – ensuring that patients are aware that they have a right to choose – and an emphasis on patient health outcomes and continuity of care.

To support the focus on patient access, a further change will alter the basis on which the HMR rural loading is paid.

Currently the loading, up to a maximum of \$60, is paid on the basis of the location of the community pharmacy providing the service, where the pharmacy is within PHARIA 2 to 6.

From 1 October, the HMR rural loading allowance will be determined by the location of the patient, and will be increased to a maximum of \$125.

For more information, go to the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement website at [www.5cpa.com.au](http://www.5cpa.com.au).



The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

## Ehealth blueprints finished

**THE** finalised plans for Australia's new eHealth system have been released today by the Department of Health and Welfare.

Titled the Concept of Operations, the plans include the implementation details and consultation pathways for Australia's electronic health system, its structure, how it will work, the security and privacy principles, and details of benefits of eHealth for patients, carers and healthcare professionals.

Describing the release as a "big step forward for eHealth", the Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon said the Concept of Operations will now be used to build the system, allowing all Australians to sign up from July next year.

"Patients will no longer have to remember every medical test, immunisation or prescription they have," Roxon said.

"Doctors and other health care

professionals will no longer have to rely on patients to accurately recall past treatment and will be able to work together more easily to provide better care," she added.

The Concept of Operations is based on the framework for a national electronic health record system agreed by the Australian Health Ministers Conference in April 2010, and which was updated following public consultation on an April 2011 draft.

Main changes between the April draft and its finalised incarnation include further refining of the registration process, and the removal of an individual's ability to mark a clinical document as 'no access' to ensure that all clinical documents in an individual's PCEHR are available in an emergency.

To view the document **CLICK HERE**.

**MEANWHILE** the launch is being supported by an *eHealth Journey* special interactive exhibition at Parliament House in Canberra.

## WIN AN AROMABABY PACK



**Pharmacy Daily** has teamed up with **Aromababy** again and is giving five lucky readers the chance to win a baby pack (pictured left), valued at \$26.95.

Aromababy is an Australian-made skin care rich in certified organic,

natural oils and gmo free pure vitamin e.

As used in select hospitals for fifteen years, this professional, world-leading brand is not sold to supermarkets assuring you of a pharmacy-focused approach to expanding your baby care category. Totally safe for mother to be/new mother and sensitive skin, Aromababy is a long time supporter of the Eczema Association.

To win this great baby pack, simply send in your answer to the question below:

### Is Aromababy® suitable for eczema?

Email your answer to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

The first correct entry received will win!

Hint: Visit: [www.aromababy.com](http://www.aromababy.com)

**Congratulations** to yesterday's lucky winner: **Anna Michael** from **APHS Pharmacy Greenslopes**.

## DISPENSARY CORNER

**ONE** mammal who needs the Nicorette cheer squad.

A 20-year old orangutan in Melaka Zoo, Malaysia, has been forced to quit cigarettes, after her habit began to concern officials.

According to reports, the primate, Shirley, was in the habit of begging tourists to throw her lit cigarettes, which she would then smoke in her enclosure.

Although claimed to be not addicted to nicotine, Shirley has now been removed from the zoo because of concerns from animal groups that she was beginning to show habit forming behaviour, such as agitation when she was not smoking.

Fortunately for Shirley, she is expected to be moved to a wildlife centre in Borneo, where she will be sans cigarettes and integrated with fellow rangas in a "more natural" orangutan environment.

### EVERLASTING life...

Whilst many scoff at Elvis' seeming ability to cheat death, one fan has taken the world's media proof of the King's continued existence, in the form of a cloud formation

The fan, Marta Gerique snapped Elvis in the sky whilst on holiday in Valencia, Spain.

"It caught my attention because the sun had lightened it from behind and it was such a rare shape," she said.

"I didn't initially see Elvis but when I got a good look at in on the screen of my Blackberry I realised it was definitely him - his hair is unmistakable," she added.

It was the perfect coup for the die-hard fan, who even wakes up with Elvis, playing Devil in Disguise via her alarm clock.

