

## Emergency locums

**THE** Pharmacy Guild of Australia is reminding pharmacy owners of its Emergency Locum Service which provides 24 hour a day, seven day a week telephone access (1800 357 001) and aims to place a pharmacy locum in any rural or remote location in Australia within 24 hours of a request, for a maximum of seven days.

"The Emergency Locum Service is managed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, and assists with the cost and logistics of supplying locums to rural and remote pharmacies in emergency circumstances," the Guild said.

To access the Service or to find out more about it, or if you wish to register as an emergency locum, please visit [www.els.com.au](http://www.els.com.au).

## Heart Week Kit

**THE** Heart Foundation has launched its Heart Week kit.

Registrations close on 21 March, call 1300 362 787 for details, or see [www.heartfoundation.org.au/heartweek](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/heartweek).

## US Osphena approval

**THE** US Food and Drug Administration has approved Osphena (ospemifene) to treat women experiencing moderate to severe dyspareunia (pain during sexual intercourse), a symptom of vulvar and vaginal atrophy due to menopause.

Osphena, a pill taken with food once daily, acts like estrogen on vaginal tissues to make them thicker and less fragile.

## PSA lashes out on overspend

**THE** Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has expressed concern over suggestions that the current Home Medicines Reviews (HMR) budget overspend should be addressed through cuts in remuneration for HMRs and other professional services.

The comments follow Health Minister Tanya Plihersek's announcement last Friday, of a range of measures to ensure that the HMRs are delivered appropriately to patients (*PD Breaking News* 08 Mar).

Speaking about the whispered HMR budget cuts, Acting President of the PSA, Joe Demarte, said "further investment, not less, should be considered for professional pharmacy services such as the Home Medicines Review program to ensure the ongoing viability of their delivery".

Demarte went further to say that cutting HMR and professional services funding to address the HMR budget overspend would be a very damaging approach, not only for consumers, but for the health system.

"We need to invest more into professional services so that we can continue to deliver these essential HMRs and other programs which are producing very positive health outcomes for the community," he said.

Demarte went on to say that whilst the PSA was excluded from the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement negotiations, it said from the outset when the budget was revealed that the funds allocated for HMRs are inadequate.

"But suggestions now that the way to address the overspend is to disincentivise delivery of the HMR and other professional service programs is naive and would only add to long-term health costs," he said.

"Professional programs such as HMRs have been shown to greatly reduce health costs through interventions which reduce hospitalisations and long-term treatment costs," he added.

Demarte went further to say that the current HMR funding crisis highlighted the need for a separate negotiating process to be developed around the development and delivery of professional programs through community pharmacies.

"Clearly the current negotiating process has fallen down in this instance and this is evidence that we need to have one group representing the business side of pharmacy negotiating those aspects of the Community Pharmacy Agreement, and another negotiating for professional services," he said.

"In the meantime it is critical to find ways to maintain the funding of professional pharmacy services," he added.

## Today in Pharmacy

**TODAY'S PD** features two pages of news **PLUS** a full page from the Guild offering \$99 registration for the NSW Pharmacy National Convention & Exhibition 2013 (**p3**).

## Mobile weight program

Researchers at the University of Sydney have joined forces with colleagues at the University of NSW and UTS to launch a world-first weight management program for young adults, delivered via mobile phones.

"The program helps people to make better food choices - to eat and drink better and to include more fresh produce in their diets, especially fruit and vegetables," said Lead researcher, Associate Professor Margaret Allman-Farinelli.

"The program is mainly aimed at those finding they are putting on a few kilos now they are in their 20s and early 30s rather than the obese, who are needing to lose considerable weight," she added.

The researchers are currently recruiting for participants aged 18-35 to be part of a randomised controlled trial to test the program's efficacy.

Those interested in participating should email- [kate.balestracci@sydney.edu.au](mailto:kate.balestracci@sydney.edu.au).

## WIN A BOTTLE OF ROSEHIP OIL



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## Weekly Comment

Welcome to **PD's** weekly comment feature. This week's contributor is **Paul Rowe, Chief Executive of Razor Group of Companies.**



### Buying a pharmacy

You have made the decision to buy a pharmacy.

Congratulations you have taken the first step in securing your financial freedom, a life full of holidays and overflowing buckets of money!!!!

Or have you made the worst decision of your life?

The way you handle the process from here will determine whether you live a life of luxury or live a life of regret.

Your first decision is what type of pharmacy to buy; a pharmacy in a shopping centre, a strip shop, a medical centre or maybe a discounter.

Understand what financial resources you have, this will determine how much you can afford to borrow or the level at which you can purchase.

Decide what entity you wish to purchase the pharmacy in, a trust, company, sole trader or partnership.

You are now in a position to go hunting.

Gather all available data before drawing up an offer and look for any issues that may affect the pharmacy.

To decide on a purchase price you will need to be guided by your experience or that of others (get the best professional advice you can afford).

Before you sign a contract have your solicitors check it and ensure that you can comply with all the clauses, as the law is very clear when it comes to contracts.

Next week I will discuss due diligence and the steps to settlement. Happy hunting!

## Trans-Tasman early warning

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration and NZ's Medsafe have released details of a Trans Tasman early warning system of safety concerns for medicines and medical devices.

The program is outlined in a new paper, detailed on the TGA website for consultation, titled *The Trans-Tasman early warning system: How the process will work in Australia and New Zealand.*

According to the paper, the purpose of the program is to establish a trans-Tasman early warning system for advising the public about potential safety concerns associated with medicines and medical devices.

In designing the system the TGA and Medsafe consulted with the United States Food and Drug Administration, Health Canada and Health Singapore regarding their current alerting systems for medicines, and also held a series of workshops in Melbourne, Sydney and Wellington which were attended by consumer, health professional, government and industry stakeholder representatives.

The Early Warning System will be based on four principals: 'Timely', 'Sustainable', 'Responsive', and 'Engaging'.

According to the plan, there are several points in the therapeutic product vigilance process where the decision to issue a communication can be made.

"Two different types of communication are possible: monitoring communication and an alert communication," the report said.

"The decision to issue a monitoring communication can be made either at: the initial assessment/risk analysis step when all safety concerns are considered and may be communicated; or the signal investigation/assessment step when concerns deemed to be safety signals are considered and may be communicated," the report added.

All the monitoring communications issued will have a subsequent

communication advising the outcome of the safety concern.

The decision to issue an alert communication will be made at the conclusion of the signal investigation/assessment and will be made independent of whether a monitoring communication was issued or not, the report said.

In addition, follow up communication(s) may be issued after a monitoring communication and prior to a final communication, however these will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Meanwhile, monitoring communications are intended to highlight potential safety concerns, stimulate adverse event reporting, and instruct users to follow the manufacturer's product information/ instructions for the medicine or medical device (where applicable).

The paper is now open for consultation until 07 April, for more information, or to view the paper see [www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au).

### Moldy sleep times

**A NEW** study of pillows has found that using pillows older than five years may make Australians sick.

Funded by Tontine, the study found that found that pillows older than five years had twice as much mould in them when compared to pillows less than two years old, whilst the different types of mould present in pillows also appeared to be directly related to the age of the pillow.

Interestingly the average age of pillows used by Australians was found to be five years.

The research also demonstrated differences in mould levels found in pillows from state to state, with the pillows collected in the Northern Territory having six times more mould than those collected in New South Wales, whilst Western Australia was found to have the next highest levels of mould, followed by Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, and Tasmania where the least amount of mould was found.

## DISPENSARY CORNER



### COLD exercise?

Many people try to avoid the cold, but for a group of intrepid runners, the cold is the perfect opportunity to exercise the body and mind, with a gruelling marathon in minus 12C temperatures.

Dubbed one of the world's most extreme marathons, this year the Siberian Lake Run involved 150 participants who ran in -12 temperatures across a frozen lake which in places has ice less than 80cm thick.

The race began at 9am and started with runners making offerings to the lake.

Interestingly, due to the purity of the air, the runners were able to see the finish line from the very beginning, reminding them at all times of just how far they had to run.

The winner took out the race in 3 hours and 7 minutes, which is remarkable given the difficulty of running on ice.

### DOGS inspire weight loss.

A US gym has employed a novel new weight loss method which involves both human and canine participation.

The gym, K9 Fit Club, runs its bow wow classes for humans and their pet dogs, and sees the human/pooch combination undergo a series of boot-camp styled exercise designed to help both parties trim the fat.

K9 was founded by Tricia Montgomery and her pet basset hound Louie, after both were declared morbidly obese.

Exercising with her dog led Montgomer to drop 58kgs, whilst Louie dropped 22% of his body weight.

Montgomery now aims to spread her knowledge and help other pup/ person duos struggling with their weight and fitness regain their svelte figures.







The Pharmacy  
Guild of Australia



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Spot prizes will also be given away over the weekend.

Conditions apply for further details please visit our website [www.nswpharmacy-nce.com.au](http://www.nswpharmacy-nce.com.au)  
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