

Advanced credentials

THE Advanced Practice Credentialing Committee (APCC) met on 01 May for the first time, and has released the first drafts of the credential evaluation standards, policies and processes for public consultation.

The Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) said the credentialing system would be piloted this year with full implementation by early next year.

The draft gives a timeline for implementation as well as outlining five areas the Advanced Pharmacy Practice Framework identified as important for development in, and demonstration of, advanced levels of practice; expert professional practice; networking, leadership and influence which includes professional and ethical practice; communication, collaboration and teamwork; leadership and management; critical analysis, research and education.

Thirty competencies are located across these five areas at three stages of development.

To make a submission, **CLICK HERE**.

Authority meds review

THE Minister for Health Peter Dutton has announced a review of the process for prescribing "authority medicines".

Speaking at the Australian Medical Association (AMA) National Conference last week, Dutton said there were currently 447 post marketing surveillance "authority medicines" and the review would begin with authorities relating for drugs used in cancer treatments.

It would result in simpler processes, Dutton said.

The Department of Health said the review would consider criteria which determined an authority required listing, and review all current listings in groups, with the aim of "reducing the administrative burden on prescribers and dispensers of PBS listed medicines."

Currently, authority required Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme prescriptions necessitate contact with the Department of Human to give approval.

The review would be undertaken

in consultation with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Medicines Australia, the Society of Hospital Pharmacists, the AMA, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Medical Oncologist Group of Australia, Dutton said.

"Allowing patients to get the medicines they need as quickly as possible remains an absolute priority for the Government."

A schedule for the staggered consultation period on different classes of drugs and types of authorities will be published tomorrow.

The Department of Health said the need for such a review was identified in the review of chemotherapy funding arrangements where it was found the authority listings caused regulatory burden to prescribing oncologists.

The review will follow the post market review process, it said. For more, **CLICK HERE**.

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NCE 2014 in 4 weeks

THIS year's National Convention Exhibition is being held from 20-22 Jun at Australian Technology Park.

Billed as NSW's most affordable pharmacy convention, the event is now open for registrations at www.nswpharmacy-nce.com.au - see **Page 4** for details.

GSK closes Rowville

GSK announced last week the immediate closure of the Stiefel skin science facility in Rowville, Victoria, with 22 jobs lost.

The company said it had decided to create a new centre in topical formulation in North Carolina, at the home of Stiefel R&D, employing over 120 specialist scientists.

Pharmaceuticals GSK Australia gm Geoff McDonald said while it was a loss to Australian scientific development, the consolidation of skin R&D at the established facility would increase productivity and boost innovation capability.

The company has said it is working through the implications for impacted employees.

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83% less GP visits?

A **POLL** by Cegedim Medibus of 200 general practitioners (GPs) has found 83% expect a reduction in patient visits following the Federal Government's announcement of a \$7 co-payment for GP visits.

The survey was conducted online with 200 randomly selected GPs from a pool of 1,200.

The GPs reported they saw 524 patients per month on average, writing 103 scripts per month, the company said.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, there were 43,400 GPs in 2011, which would mean the survey sample represented 0.46% of the total population size.

The Government has estimated that GP visits would fall by about only 1%, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported.

New AMA president

ASSOCIATE professor Brian Owler, a Sydney neurosurgeon, has been elected the new Australian Medical Association (AMA) Federal president, taking over from Dr Steve Hambleton after three years.

Dr Stephen Parnis was elected vice president.

Owler said one of his first priorities was to speak with the Government about the patient co-payments and other Budget decisions, including public hospital and Indigenous health funding, the AMA said.

Owler was the face and driving force of the 'Don't Rush' anti-speeding campaign, the AMA said.

Self-funding an issue

PATIENT self-funding of treatment and medication in Australia is becoming more common but discussion about the issue is not, the eighth biennial National Medicines Symposium (NMS 2014) held last week in Brisbane heard.

Dr Jennie Louise from the University of Adelaide talked about the ethical issues associated with patient self-funding of high-cost medications, saying it was becoming more common but there was limited formal policy debate or public discussion around the issue.

"Even when there is no funding or support available to reduce the cost of medicines, there is evidence that patients want to be told about all the treatment options, even if they can't afford them."

Louise pointed out that in future there may be more pressure by patient groups to fund non cost-effective medicines.

NPS winners

THE winners of the National Medicinewise Awards were announced last week, with excellence in consumer initiatives (community level) going to Mary Hanna, of the Monash Health Pharmacy Department with her Hospital Outreach Medication review.

NPS Medicinewise executive manager Karen Kaye said the awards recognised contributions made by professionals who positively impacted quality use of medicines and medical tests.

"However, the establishment of a new market for self-funded medicines may undermine the bargaining power of government."

Louise said that over time this could further increase the costs of healthcare by, for example, increasing consultation times and administration, monitoring treatment of side effects and other related secondary care that is required for people on high-cost treatment.

"This issue will only continue to escalate, and we need more public awareness alongside firm debate on how to address self-funded treatment."

Ignorance on NSAIDs

A PRESENTATION at this week's National Medicines Symposium (NMS 2014) in Brisbane has highlighted the dangers of people taking common medicines such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) without awareness of the potential risks or harms.

University of Wollongong Graduate School of Medicine senior lecturer Dr Judy Mullan said that many Australians purchased over-the-counter NSAIDs as common pain relief medicines.

She said if taken appropriately they could be relatively safe medicines, however if taken incorrectly, they could cause severe adverse medical events.

"We surveyed customers purchasing over-the-counter NSAIDs, containing the active ingredient ibuprofen, from seven different community pharmacies in NSW."

Mullan conducted the research in collaboration with university colleagues.

Out of the 263 people surveyed, 20% could not identify the correct active ingredient and more than a third were unaware of the recommended maximum daily dose.

Mullan said pharmacists needed to play more of an active role in educating consumers about the potential for NSAID-related adverse effects at the point of sale.

College Board named

AUSTRALIAN College of Pharmacy national president Trent Twomey has stepped down.

Twomey told College members he did not stand for re-election due to the demands of his business and professional life.

New board members have been confirmed as Susann Holzberger, Treasure McGuire, Peter Saccasan, Patrick Reid and Georgina Twomey who will serve until 2017.

Twomey said he was delighted the members had elected a gender balanced board, having been on record as saying one of pharmacy's challenges was the need for women in more leadership positions.

He acknowledged outgoing board members, particularly Trevor Clarkin, who stepped down as vice president and whose support and passion for the College ideals would be missed, Twomey said.

New MA Code

MEDICINES Australia will present its finalised review of the Code of Conduct to members at next month's meeting.

Ceo Dr Brendan Shaw said members would be voting on the 18th edition of the Code shortly.

It included greater transparency about the relationship between companies and healthcare professionals, he said.

"Medicines Australia supports a strong industry code that evolves with changing community expectations."

GlaxoSmithKline recently published its figures for fees paid to Australian healthcare professionals including pharmacists, saying it was a strong supporter of transparency in the industry (*PD* 12 May).

RGH on ruxolitinib

RGH Pharmacy E-Bulletin this week focusses on the role of ruxolitinib (Jakavi from Novartis) in the treatment of myelofibrosis.

Myelofibrosis is a disorder of the bone marrow and also known as chronic idiopathic myelofibrosis or primary myelofibrosis.

To read the E-Bulletin, **CLICK HERE**.

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Weekly Comment

Welcome to **PD's** weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is

Tony Carollo,
Director -
Carollo Horton
& Associates



Professional Liability Insurance: How to Protect your Business and Reputation Risk

IN today's economic climate of increased responsibility and accountability, it's more important than ever for professionals to protect themselves and their company against legal liability, threat of litigation and potential damage to their reputation. Here are three ways to protect your business and professional reputation risk.

1. Directors and Officers Liability Insurance

Provides protection for directors, senior executives, and other officers against the risk of liability arising from their duties.

2. Statutory Liability Insurance
Protection for companies and individuals against certain liabilities that result from breaches of legislation.

3. Professional Indemnity Insurance

Protection against a wide range of potential actions arising from breaches of professional duty.

Professional Liability Insurance is an essential component of risk management that provides valuable cover for businesses and professionals across a broad range of industries. It enables you to operate confidently and securely in the knowledge that you're covered for the potential exposures facing you and your business.

Contact your professional advisor who will assist you with identifying potential risks in your business and find the right solution for you.

Global hit to illegal meds

IN a coordinated global campaign, the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (ACBPS) and the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) helped in a week of action against the trade in counterfeit and illegal medicines purchased over the internet.

'Operation Pangea' involved authorities from more than 100 countries, including the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the UK's Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), which resulted in seizures totalling about £18.6m (\$33.9m) globally, the MHRA said.

In Australia, ACBPS officers seized 51 packages including more than 21,000 units of counterfeit or illegal medicines at the Sydney and Melbourne International mail centres, posted from various countries overseas, with one unit being one tablet, pill, ampoule, one litre of liquid medicine or one kg or raw material.

A large number of seized substances being erectile dysfunction or weight loss medications, the TGA and ACBPS said.

TGA national manager Professor John Skerrett said this was a reminder for consumers of the

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risks of purchasing medicines from overseas websites, with the TGA advising extreme caution when doing so.

The MHRA said the crackdown resulted in 237 arrests worldwide, targeting 10,603 websites.

UK seizures showed the most commonly seized drugs were erectile dysfunction medicines at 1.2m doses, slimming products at 383,000 and drugs such as sleeping pills, tranquilisers and antidepressants at 330,996 doses.

The FDA and the US Customs and Border Protection also investigated international mail facilities in the US, with the detention or seizure of 19,618 packages containing medicines said to be from Australia, the UK, New Zealand and Canada, but actually containing unapproved or suspected counterfeit drugs from other countries such as India, China, Australia and the UK.

FDA nods Dalvance

THE FDA has approved Dalvance (dalbavancin), an antibacterial drug to treat adult skin infections.

Dalvance is the first drug designated as a Qualified Infectious Disease Product to receive FDA approval.



DISPENSARY CORNER

IT'S an emergency update.

Another great excuse to use social networking at work has arrived via *Metro*, which reports that a Facebook status update saved a geography professor's life when he posted on the American Climber Science Program's page that he needed help after falling down the crevasse of a Himalayan glacier.

The publication reported that Professor John All wrote 'Please call Global Rescue. John broken arm, ribs, internal bleeding. Himlung camp 2. Please hurry.'

Members of his team alerted rescuers but it still took 19 hours to get All to a hospital, *Metro* reported.

DO you sell motor oil? Why not?

From the website www.pharmacychick.com come some of the weirdest questions a pharmacist has been asked.

First there was the guy who asked the pharmacist how to barbecue corn.

Then there was the person who asked if they sold motor oil because they didn't want to make two trips.

The most worrying was the customer who asked "How much Sudafed should I give my dog?"

When the pharmacist replied that since dogs didn't get colds, none, and to check with the customer's veterinarian, they were told "Thanks for nothing!"

For more odd questions fielded by pharmacists, [CLICK HERE](#).

PILL popping puppies.

New Zealand paramedics had an interesting emergency call when they broke into a house to find two bulldog puppies, one chewing on prescription pills and the other biting a panic button, stuff.co.nz reported.

One of the puppies had bitten the button 12 times while both had eaten four different types of medication and packaging, but were well after being given emetics, the publication reported.

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