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Reg & license renewal

VICTORIAN pharmacies and pharmacy departments, and current owners of pharmacies and pharmacy departments are being reminded by the Victorian Pharmacy Authority about the renewal of their 2016 pharmacy licenses and registrations.

This year, invoices will be sent out via email to registered premises only, not to individual owners, the Authority said.

Notices will arrive in the first week of May for annual renewals of Pharmacy and Pharmacy Department premises registration, and Licences to carry on a pharmacy business or pharmacy department.

The Victorian Pharmacy Authority asks all pharmacists to notify them of the current email address for all registered premises.

Payment is due by 30 Jun.

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MA, GBMA debate innovation

INNOVATE or evergreen are key words in the debate that is now raging between peak pharmaceutical industry body Medicines Australia (MA) and the Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association (GBMA) over a draft report from the Productivity Commission into Australia's intellectual property arrangements.

The report has argued that there should be no extension of the period of data protection, including for biological medicines.

With pharmaceutical companies investing approximately \$1 billion every year on R&D in Australia, Medicines Australia says intellectual property protection is one important factor among many which is taken into consideration before these investment decisions are made.

"Maintaining an environment that supports this investment is crucial for the thousands of Australian scientists, research organisations, universities and local biotechs which rely on this investment from our members to discover

and innovate for the benefit of all Australians," MA said in a release.

"Intellectual Property directly benefits patients by driving and incentivising Research and Development (R&D) of the latest breakthrough therapies to treat and cure disease."

GBMA meanwhile welcomed the report saying it provides evidence of an imbalance in Australia's pharmaceutical patent system.

"Building on recommendations of the 2013 Pharmaceutical Patents Review, this draft report emphasises the need to get the balance right to deliver the best outcome for the Australian community," GBMA ceo, Belinda Wood said.

GBMA highlighted that the report recognises that evergreening strategies employed by originator pharmaceutical companies delay the supply of generic medicines in Australia, costing money, since delaying generic medicine market entry means that through the PBS, taxpayers unnecessarily overpay for medicines.

Generic Crestor tick

THE US Food and Drug Administration has approved the first generic version of Crestor (rosuvastatin calcium) tablets.

The generic is indicated for the treatment of hypertriglyceridemia in combination with diet in adults; in combination with diet for treatment of patients with primary dysbetalipoproteinemia; and either alone or in combination with other cholesterol treatments for adult patients with homozygous familial hypercholesterolemia.

New orphan drug

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has updated its list of designated orphan drugs, with the addition of Biogen Australia's Nusinersen solution for injection, indicated for the treatment of Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA).

PSA pharmacy student award

RMIT pharmacy student Harpreet Kaur Singh was awarded the 2016 PSA Pharmacy Gold Medal Award recently presented by the PSA Victorian Branch.

The prestigious medal is presented annually to the top performing pharmacy student in the pharmacy program at the university.

PSA Victorian Branch President Benjamin Marchant congratulated Ms Kaur Singh and acknowledged her excellent academic achievements.

As well as the gold medal, Singh



received \$1000 worth of PSA professional development.

She hopes to pursue a career in hospital pharmacy and is currently undertaking an internship at the Austin Hospital in Melbourne.

Pictured above from left are: Professor David Pow, RMIT Head, School of Medical Sciences; Ms Harpreet Kaur Singh; and Benjamin Marchant MPS, PSA Victorian President.

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NPS MEDICINEWISE PROFESSIONAL

NZ Grey Power pact

THE Pharmacy Guild of New Zealand has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with seniors group Grey Power New Zealand Federation Inc.

Under the agreement both organisations will pursue common interests including inequalities between the elderly in rest homes and those in their own homes, inequalities due to so-called 'postcode health' and issues with community pharmacy deregulation, for the benefit of their members, patients and communities.

"The MoU will encourage both organisations to keep a close watch on any potential changes that may impact the members of one or both organisations," said NZ Guild President Ken Orr.

"With so much on the agenda for the community pharmacy sector this year, we welcome and look forward to working alongside Grey Power in a collaborative approach towards improving the health, wellbeing and quality of life of our patients and communities," he said.

Heart treatment warning

A STUDY published today in the *Medical Journal of Australia* has found that almost one million Australians at high risk of heart attack or stroke in the next five years are not receiving the currently recommended combination of medications.

The research, led by ANU's Professor Emily Banks, has concluded that tens of thousands of Australian lives could be saved if people aged 45 or over had a full risk assessment, and those at high risk took the recommended mix of blood pressure and cholesterol lowering medicines.

"Australia has a massive opportunity to prevent heart attacks and strokes," Banks said.

The study is the first to quantify the risk of cardiovascular disease for Australians, and found about 20% of the population aged 45 to 74 is at high risk based on factors including their age and sex, whether they smoke, their blood pressure, whether or not they have

diabetes and their level of kidney function.

The Heart Foundation's chief medical advisor Professor Garry Jennings said the findings were a wake-up call for the community, health professionals and government about the "huge number at risk and missing out on life-saving checks".

The ANU research was conducted in collaboration with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, using data from the 2011-12 National Health Measures survey.

Bactroban shortage

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has confirmed a shortage of Bactroban (mupirocin), with resupply not expected until the end of Oct.

A spokesperson for the TGA was quoted by *Fairfax* media as saying the agency was actively working with suppliers to source an alternative product.

Flu vaccine demand

THE pharmacists of the WA Friendlies Pharmacy group have delivered more than 10,500 flu vaccinations between 14 Mar and 28 Apr, with a further 1800 already forward booked.

The group said these high numbers show the public is happy to receive vaccines in a pharmacies - opening up debate about the potential to expand on the types of immunisations that could be delivered by pharmacists.

IDT trials centre open

IDT Australia last week opened a new CMAX purpose-built clinical trial facility in Adelaide.

Projects to be undertaken there include a second study investigating a wearable device to provide an early warning system for hypoglycaemic events in diabetic patients, and a gene therapy study developed by a Japanese biopharmaceutical company for the treatment of peripheral arterial disease.

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Pfizer pays Wyeth bill

PHARMACEUTICAL giant Pfizer has committed to paying US\$784m to US federal and state Medicaid programs to cover off a Wyeth fine for allegedly failing to declare its best prices to Medicaid to avoid paying millions of dollars in rebates, according to *Modern Healthcare*.

More than a decade prior to Pfizer's purchase of American pharmaceutical company in 2009, Wyeth had engaged in what Medicaid regarded as inappropriate pricing practices which contravened a law requiring drug companies to report to the government the best prices they offer other customers on brand-name drugs.

Wyeth, now as the subsidiary of Pfizer, will pay the federal government US\$413m and the state Medicaid programs US\$371m, but without any admission of liability by the company.

The allegations were originally brought by whistle-blowers Lauren Kieff and William St. John LaCorte.

In such False Claims Act cases, whistle-blowers are entitled to a percentage of whatever money the government recovers.

In this case, the whistleblowers will get a significant combined US\$98 million.

New Guild ad campaign

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has launched the second stage of its consumer campaign, which aims to "strengthen community pharmacy's position among consumers as a trusted source of health service and advice".

It follows the 2014 debut of the 'Discover More. Ask Your Pharmacist' promotion, with the new iteration featuring the Guild's Gold Cross brand prominently (above) after research showed recognition of the symbol reached 54% in the first phase.

The target audience for chapter one of the campaign was women aged 24-45, with the scope broadened in the new promotion to include women aged up to 55, including those 'caring up' for parents and 'caring down' for children.

It aims to encourage more customers to visit their local pharmacy for advice and services.

Post campaign research from the first phase showed 75% of



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customers has used a pharmacy between two and six times a year were more likely to consider using a pharmacy for advice or treatment after

seeing the TV ad.

In Chapter 2, the campaign will have a strong digital focus, and include digital advertising, display ads in relevant online publications, mobile targeting and search engine optimisation.

There will be in-store collateral for the campaign including staff badges, prescription packs and fridge magnets, while the website at www.askyourpharmacist.com.au will have a 'find a pharmacy' feature and video presentations from real pharmacists highlighting a range of healthcare services including baby care, asthma, medications management and diabetes care.

S8 sales records

DURING March this year five Panel Hearings were held into allegations that pharmacist licensees had failed in their handling of Schedule 8 (S8) products, the Victorian Pharmacy Authority has reported in its monthly Communiqué.

In all cases the proprietors were found to have failed to comply with legislation and good pharmacy practice because they didn't ensure transaction records in S8 poisons showed the true and accurate balance of each poison remaining in their possession after each transaction.

In two cases, S8 were not stored in a compliant Schedule 8 poisons safe, in one case simply being stored in an unlocked drawer.

Other related deficiencies were found and in all cases proprietors were reprimanded, the VPA said.

DISPENSARY CORNER

A TEAM of sniffer dogs at a British airport have proved themselves experts at sniffing out cheeses and meats, but not so nifty at finding illegal drugs.

English media is reporting that the dogs which were a 1.25 million pound investment for the airport have failed to find any illegal class A drugs in the past seven months.

The pooches have, however, been champions at finding small amounts of cheese or sausages, wrongly brought back by returning British holidaymakers.

Nice work pups, surely sausages smell tastier than cocaine.

The airport is now examining "how better to deploy the dogs".



AN ICELANDIC pool has hit back with graphic posters (above) after it came to their attention it was becoming commonplace for men to use communal hair dryers on their, er...nether regions.

They've created a somewhat awkward poster titled "This is not a ball sack dryer".

It reads: "Don't dry your ball sack or your butt with the communal hairdryer in the swimming pool or the gym".

"Bald older gentlemen with hairy torsos must either bring their own blow-dryers or just buy a more absorbent towel," it continued.

Well, no beating about the bush there, point taken.

Let's hope it works.

WIN WITH NUTRI-SYNERGY

This week Pharmacy Daily and Nutri-Synergy are giving away a prize pack including NS Dry Skin Moisturiser and NS Extra Dry Skin Moisturiser each day.

Nutri-Synergy is Natural Dermatology for dry, sensitive and problem skin. NS restores and maintains your skin's natural, healthy condition while supporting the skin's natural protective barrier with ingredients rich in natural moisturising factors for more effective moisturising. Win a pack containing NS Dry Skin Moisturiser and NS Extra Dry Skin Moisturiser, both 250ml pumps.

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