

APC skills fees up



australian
pharmacy
council

THE Australian Pharmacy Council has announced that fees for APC Skills Assessment will increase from 01 Jan 2018, with the new levels set at \$1,230 for Stream A & Stream B.

The \$600 fee for Updated Skills Assessment remains unchanged.

Other details around eligibility for assessment, including registration and qualifications are summarised on the APC website along with UK reciprocal arrangements.

To access details of changes visit pharmacycouncil.org.au.

PSA urges GP-pharmacy trial

THE Pharmaceutical Society of Australia has recommended the implementation of a large-scale trial to integrate pharmacists into general practice, as part of its submission for the 2018-19 Federal Budget which was unveiled today.

The PSA also suggested the development of a pharmacist-delivered Minor Ailments Service in community pharmacies, with the organisation's national president, Shane Jackson, saying there is a "significant, cost-effective opportunity for the government to further optimise the contribution and skills of pharmacists in

Australia's health system.

"As the most accessible health care professionals in Australia, pharmacists are ideally placed to provide medication management, high quality medicines advice and education to consumers, especially those with chronic and complex conditions," Jackson said.

The PSA president cited a recent systematic review which found integrating pharmacists in GP clinics resulted in interventions that significantly improved blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol, osteoporosis management and cardiovascular risk.

"Having effective interprofessional collaboration is critical to the future sustainability and efficiency of Australia's health system," he said.

PSA has suggested allocating \$5 million for the pilot of a structured pharmacist-delivered ailments system, in collaboration with local general practitioners.

The proposal would involve Primary Health Networks to target rural areas and regions with high numbers of emergency presentations for minor ailments.

The full PSA budget submission is now online at psa.org.au.

Minor ailments pilot

MORE than 600 pharmacies servicing a population of 2.6 million in the north-east of England are being given the chance to take part in a new patient referral pilot scheme, reports *The Pharmaceutical Journal*.

The service, which will be piloted until 31 Mar 2018, will see NHS 111 call handlers referring patients with 'low acuity' conditions to community pharmacists for face-to-face consultations using PharmOutcomes or NHSmail.

The conditions eligible for the referral service include rashes, constipation, diarrhoea, vaginal discharge, sore eye, mouth ulcer, failed contraception, vomiting, scabies and ear wax.

The aim of the pilot, which is being funded by the Pharmacy Integration Fund, is to increase capacity and relieve pressure on existing urgent-care services.

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee director Alastair Buxton said, "The service aligns well with the 'Five year forward view' and NHS England's current priorities, including moving care closer to home, 'channel shifting' and promoting self-care.

"The pilot should demonstrate how the community pharmacy network can be effectively used as part of the NHS urgent care system and it will hopefully build the case for a similar approach to be taken across the whole of England."

Pharmacy confidence high - UTS



THE 2017 UTS Pharmacy Barometer has reached the highest confidence level in the measure's six-year history, reflecting gains in employee pharmacist remuneration and optimism that pharmacies will increase in value.

UTS' Professor Charlie Benrimoj detailed an optimism and confidence score for 2017 of 96.4 out of 200 (where a score of 100 represents a neutral level of confidence) - an improvement of 5% on the 2016 confidence level.

Overall, pharmacists' pay rose over the last year with a greater proportion moving from \$30-40 per hour pay category (63% in 2016 versus 74% in 2017) to \$40-50 (27% in 2017 versus 20% in 2016).

Optimism also grew around the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement with increased opportunities to provide broader services such as vaccinations, blood pressure measures, smoking cessation guidance and weight

management, Benrimoj said.

"Many have realised that service provision is imperative for future viability" with a whopping 56% of pharmacists identifying professional services as the greatest opportunity over the next three years.

More than 65% of pharmacists said they had started to implement new professional services in 2017.

One of the greatest challenges to community pharmacies was the burgeoning online retail pharmacy channel, identified by 50% of pharmacists as having a potentially negative impact.

Biosimilars business was highlighted as a high profit opportunity, while using MedASSIST as a tool for identifying opioid addicts represented a positive for 54% of respondents.

Around 17% of pharmacists also indicated they were valuing collaboration with their local Primary Health Networks.

Visit uts.edu.au for the Barometer.

Apotex founder death

PHARMACEUTICAL billionaire Barry Sherman, chairman and ceo of Apotex Inc, and his wife were found dead in their Toronto, Canada home under suspicious circumstances late last week.

"Toronto Police are investigating, and I hope that investigation will be able to provide answers for all of us who are mourning this tremendous loss," Toronto mayor John Tory said.

The Shermans had recently listed their home for sale for nearly C\$7m (around AU\$7.11m) and their bodies were found by the real estate agent in the basement.

The couple were well known for their philanthropy benefiting hospitals, universities and Jewish organisations.

Apotex is the world's seventh largest generic drugmaker with 11,000 employees and annual sales of more than C\$2 billion in more than 45 countries.

Wisely choosing 2017

CHOOSING Wisely Australia has reported on its 2017 progress in "Join the Conversation", highlighting key achievements and learnings over the past year.

The organisation held its first national meeting in May, released results from the first Choosing Wisely hospital pilot projects, rolled out the first NPS MedicineWise national educational visiting program in primary care to more than 7,000 GPs and established a working group with Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF), to design, develop and implement strategies to support consumer engagement in primary care.

Visit choosingwisely.org.au.



Dispensary Corner

HUNDREDS of hirsute Britons are set to earn a bit of extra Christmas cash by allowing harried shoppers to stroke their bearded faces, reports the *BBC*.

More than 4,000 blokes responded to a job advertisement posted by Leicester-based hair products maker Mo Bro's Grooming Co, offering £30 per hour for those prepared to staff a "beard stroking station".

The soothing service aims to de-stress shoppers in the final days before Christmas, with Mo Bro's co-owner Keval Dattani citing studies suggesting that patting pets can be good for health.

"We didn't want to enlist the help of animals because obviously they can be somewhat unpredictable and chaotic.

"So, doing what we do, we thought beards are the next best thing," Dattani said.

The "stroking station" will see bearded blokes poke their heads through a wooden screen, with each session taking 20 minutes and accompanied by appropriately soothing music.

Hand sanitiser will be available, and the strokers will also have the option of wearing disposable gloves, while Mo Bro's products will be on hand to combat dry skin from too much rubbing.

"The last thing they'll want is itchy beards," Mr Dattani added.



Board research key

THE Pharmacy Board of Australia has had a keen focus on research, with the profession-specific annual report summary looking at its work during 2017 released on Fri.

One area of interest was around compounding of sterile injectable medicines, while the Board has also been looking at notifications (complaints) about pharmacists, with the aim of providing an evidence base to better inform the development of regulatory standards in line with the regulatory principles of the National Scheme.

Of the 53 statutory offence notifications made, 48 were closed, with most of the new matters relating to advertising breaches.

Thirteen matters were connected to "title protection" where people inappropriately used the title Pharmacist when they were not entitled to do so.

During the year 200 pharmacists across Australia were monitored for health, performance and/or conduct, with the summary indicating 25 cases on the ground of conduct, 14 for health reasons, 42 for performance, 15 prohibited practitioners/students and 79 cases linked to suitability/eligibility for registration.

A pilot survey of interns and preceptors was also conducted to inform understandings of issues relevant to the quality of the intern training experience.

Lastly, the Board and pharmacy stakeholders funded and participated in the review of the "National competency standards framework for pharmacists in Australia 2016".

This work is to guide the development of a set of pharmacist tools which are anticipated for release during the next reporting period.

CLICK HERE to access the report.

Untapped resource

COMMUNITY pharmacy has often been referred to as an "untapped resource" for public health, prompting a team at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health to conduct a study to examine how community pharmacy can best bolster public health in the United States.

Three main areas were identified in the research: the national opioid addiction crisis, the battle against antimicrobial resistance, and the management of disease emergencies, "especially during a pandemic".

Reference the latter opportunity, the authors said, "preparedness activities need to start well in advance of a crisis, such as through statewide protocols that allow pharmacists to prescribe and dispense medications in accordance with medical and public health standards."

Festive season support

WORK pressures in pharmacy over the holiday period can be substantial with the end of the year rush, skeleton staff over public holidays and population increases in tourist areas, said the Pharmacists' Support Service (PSS).

These combinations can lead to a heightened sense of isolation and the prospects of the new year can bring increased anxiety, PSS said.

The service will be available to provide a listening ear throughout the holiday period from 8am to 11pm EST every day.

Call 1300 244 910 for anonymous and confidential support from a pharmacist colleague and **CLICK HERE** to access useful resources.

CBD reports wrong

RECENT media reports suggesting the World Health Organization had found no public health risks with medicinal cannabis are untrue, according to the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

The distortion sprang from a WHO report to the United Nations on whether pure cannabidiol (CBD) should be subject to restrictions.

WHO findings mirrored the TGA's conclusions reached in 2014 when it reclassified CBD from S9 to S4.



Welcome to *PD's* weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is



Judy Cheung-Wood, SkinB5 Founder & Managing Director

Top 3 Strategies to Rid Acne Scars

ACNE scarring is a top concern for acne sufferers, particularly after their acne is under control focus and efforts shift to reducing and minimising scars.

Here are our top 3 proven strategy to help reduce appearance of acne scars overtime:

1. Stop and prevent acne breakouts - use a daily supplement that provides potent doses of Vitamin B5, Zinc, Nicotinamide which are proven amongst users to be highly effective for controlling and preventing acne. Acne lesions are essentially wounds that lead to unsightly scars so after acne has cleared up, prevention is the first step towards managing scarring.
2. Use only gentle, non-irritating skincare products. When the skin is functioning healthily, it's structure and normal sebum (skin oil) production together form a natural barrier that has the ability to protect itself against bacteria and irritants. Avoid products containing harsh ingredients that scrub, irritate, strip and dry the skin which could result in further damage to skin surface, sensitivity, and skin producing more oil to compensate.
3. Eat foods that contain powerful nutrients to support skin renewal and collagen production, such as avocados, red/purple fruits and vegetables, citrus. Also take a supplement that contains silica, copper and Vitamin C.