

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has two pages of news plus a full page from **Sigma**.

Cannabis opportunity

MEDICINAL cannabis is likely to provide a significant opportunity for the community pharmacy sector in Australia, with at least six manufacturers expected to take part in next year's APP conference.

Conference chairman Kos Sclavos revealed the strong interest from the medicinal cannabis sector in a presentation at APP on Fri, saying some had wanted to take part this year but it was decided the time was not right, with protocols yet to be developed.

He said he believed 95% of medicinal cannabis products would not be on the PBS, with the items effectively like the introduction of a new therapeutic class with applications in epilepsy, multiple sclerosis and palliative care.

Sclavos also highlighted the potential of private professional pharmacy programs as more and more private medicines launch.

"For manufacturers, pharmacist-facilitated support can ensure compliance and persistence in the critical first few months of therapy."

HCCC Rx weight loss alert

THE NSW Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) has issued a formal warning about the activities of the Medical Weightloss Institute which ceased trading a month ago.

The HCCC said it was aware of health practitioners, formerly associated with the organisation, who intended providing the same weight loss protocol which claims to utilise a "landmark discovery" linking hormones and weight gain.

An individualised program involves tailor-made prescription medication regimes based on a patient blood test, which the HCCC warns is "not evidence-based".

"The organisation is considered



CeBIT health focus

THE upcoming CeBIT Australia business technology show will this year focus on digital health, with the show including a Digital Health Conference featuring presentations from Tim Kelsey, ceo of the Australian Digital Health Agency, Renea Collins from Queensland Health and Dr John Lambert of eHealth NSW.

CeBIT Australia will also include a trade show with 350 exhibitors - details at cebit.com.au.

to have made extravagant claims not borne out by the weight of clinical researchers in this area," with the initial blood test described as "clinically spurious and designed to give an appearance of medical authenticity".

In practice the doctors wrote prescriptions for complementary and prescription medicines without seeing or examining clients in person, and a compounding pharmacy mailed the medication without the required accompanying information.

"A particularly vulnerable cohort of health consumers was convinced to part with large sums of money for pharmaceutical preparations that may have serious contraindications and side effects and for which there is no credible evidence of efficacy for weight loss," the HCCC warned.

ASMI drives S3 advertising

AUSTRALIAN Self Medication Industry Association (ASMI) chair Lindsay Forrest says the organisation's proposals for consumer advertising of S3 medications (*PD* 09 Feb) would see pharmacists play a larger role in Australian healthcare.

Speaking at APP last week, Forrest described the potential positive impact of the model, which ASMI has successfully trialled through the Centre for Health Economics Research and Evaluation (CHERE) at University of Technology Sydney.

The ASMI proposal calls for a mandatory 'infomercial-style' format that gives equal prominence to disease state awareness, branded product information and the pharmacist's role in determining whether the therapy is right for the consumer.

"So many more categories can be OTC," Forrest said, citing NZ examples such as erectile dysfunction medicines and the contraceptive pill.

Guild national president George Tambassis immediately pledged the organisation's support for the proposed S3 advertising model in the upcoming scheduling review.

PD APP2017 winner

THIS year at APP 2017 on the Gold Coast, *Pharmacy Daily* encouraged delegates to have their photos taken at our photo booth.

The prize of a Fitbit Charge 2 was won by Melanie Hayat, HR administrator for Pharmacy4Less.

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Dispensary Corner

US POLICE hope to lift the (eye)lid on the theft of over \$4.5 million worth of make-up stolen from a cosmetics warehouse in Los Angeles that stored Anastasia Beverly Hills Products.

Police suspect the massive eyeshadow haul occurred between 28 Jan and 30 Jan.

It seems the crooks cut a hole in the roof of the warehouse and absconded with 100,000 packages of the brand's "Modern Renaissance" eye shadow range.



CARLETON University's fitness centre in Canada believes weight alone doesn't tell the whole story.

In a bold move, the \$2 million dollar gym has removed its scales, a decision that's 'weighed heavily' on manager of wellness programs Bruce Marshall's mind.

Marshall believes it's not healthy to measure your success by just one number, explaining, "Our health and fitness is multifaceted...the best indicator is how well you feel in your body".

Some students have supported the move saying "scales can be triggering, especially for someone with an eating disorder" and that "the scales had it coming as they are a terrible liar".



Expert warns on chemist vax

VACCINATION expert Professor Robert Booy has suggested that influenza vaccines administered by general practitioners are preferable to those available via pharmacy.

Booy, who is head of the clinical research team at Sydney University's National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance and a spokesperson for the Influenza Specialist Group, told *MJA Insight* he believed patients at high risk should wait until the 2017 vaccine is available from GPs next month.

"There are a lot of people, including people over the age of 65 years, those with chronic medical conditions, pregnant women, Indigenous adults and children under 5 years of age, who can receive this vaccine free of charge some time in April," he said.

"These people should get this updated vaccine the way they have before - free from their GP."

He warned that some chemists were now advertising "cheap flu shots this year using 2016 vaccine stock" which were suitable for healthy people.

"Chemists actually get away

with it very easily...there is some Australian stock available, which is quadrivalent, so it is safe and effective. It's an Australian product and it's only available to adults.

"It's not cheap in the sense of being an inferior product - it's a good, quadrivalent vaccine made in Australia," he said.

However the 2017 vaccine, which is not available yet, has been updated to include a new Michigan strain from the US, which is different to the California strain that has been used for the past six years," Booy said - while admitting that the actual strains of flu which emerge each season is a "lottery".

New FDA head

DR SCOTT Gottlieb has been named as the new leader of the US Food and Drug Administration.

President Donald Trump has tasked Dr Gottlieb with the goal of cutting red tape at the FDA, describing the organisation's drug approval processes as "slow and burdensome" despite changes to speed reviews, particularly of cutting-edge products.

Glaucoma Aware

THIS week is World Glaucoma Week with a new Glaucoma Australia campaign titled *Glaucoma Aware* designed to unearth 150,000 Australians who face preventable blindness and don't know it.



Guild Update

APP another outstanding success

LAST week's APP was another outstanding success and a credit to all the Guild staff who work so hard to make it the biggest and best event on the pharmacy industry calendar. A highlight was the announcement by the Minister for Health, Greg Hunt, of the Guild Pharmacy of the Year Awards.

Congratulations to the overall winner Lucy Walker Chemmart Goondiwindi, Qld, and also to the category winners Capital Chemist Southlands, ACT, and Capital Chemist Wanniasa, ACT.

Minister Hunt delivered an excellent, upbeat speech which provided the Guild with encouragement on a number of the issues on which we are currently engaged with the Government.

"Australia can and should have the best health system in the world, and pharmacy has an increasingly large role to play," Mr Hunt said.

"I understand that your businesses need confidence in the future. As the grandson of a pharmacist, I want to say that I am with you," he said.

WIN WITH PLUNKETTS

This week Pharmacy Daily and Plunketts are giving away a John Plunkett Dark Spot Eraser and Facial Cleanser everyday.

New John Plunkett Dark Spot Eraser is a concentrated serum with Eventone Complex™ - a blend of multiple actives to visibly lighten pigmentation and boost your skin's health and radiance, plus it's easy to incorporate into your daily skincare routine with guaranteed results. RRP \$39.95.

Visit: www.JohnPlunkett.com.au

To win, be the first from QLD to send the correct answer to the question to comp@pharmacydaily.com.au

Is Dark Spot Eraser hard to incorporate into your daily skincare routine?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Steph Loui from Cincotta Discount Chemists.



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SIGMA'S 2017 RETAIL CONFERENCE CONCLUDES

Sigma's 2017 Retail Conference was held last week. Highlights from the conference were the launch of in-pharmacy Pathology health screening at all Amcal pharmacies nationwide enabling pharmacists to work more collaboratively with GPs and other allied healthcare professionals to deliver integrated healthcare solutions to the community. It was also announced that both Amcal and Guardian members have a suite of new and exclusive professional service programs throughout the network this year, designed to complement the current models of testing and screening in Australia which will see them lead the evolution of pharmacy

To further support its pharmacy network, Sigma also launched two new dispensary focused programs **L.E.A.P.P.** Dispensary and **S.H.E.R.P.A** (Sigma Holistic Evidence References and Patient Advice)

Sigma revealed refreshed brand identities for both Amcal and Guardian as the business embarks on a rigorous 12-month network growth strategy.

Sigma cranked up its growing partnership with Carers Australia with attendees by constructing 40 bicycles which were provided to the families of carers on the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Brisbane. Sigma also provided further support to Carers Australia by announcing an additional \$5,000 donation

Sigma also unveiled its proposed name Sigma Healthcare, to signify the company's broader commitment to healthcare solutions for its customers and business partners.

The 3-day Conference concluded with an exciting Gala Awards Dinner at Movie World where some of the country's top pharmacies were honoured.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SIGMA'S RETAIL BRANDS PLEASE CALL US ON
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