

S8 misappropriation

A NSW pharmacist who was first registered in 2013 has been disqualified from being registered for a period of three years, after being found to have engaged in unsatisfactory professional conduct and misconduct.

The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal this week ruled in a case brought by the state's Health Care Complaints Commission, which cited six formal complaints involving Schedule 8 and 4D drugs, false entries in drug registers and self administration.

The misappropriated drugs used by the pharmacist amounted to over 10,000 Endone tablets, 2,250 Alprazolam tablets and 780 Duromine tablets, leading to the "inescapable conclusion that he was affected by drugs during the performance of his professional duties," the Tribunal said.

NPS QUM program review

THE Department of Health is seeking submissions from relevant stakeholders as part of a formal review of the delivery of the Quality Use of Medicines (QUM) Program by NPS MedicineWise.

Emeritus Professor Lloyd Sansom has been appointed to undertake the probe, which is the result of a 2018-19 Budget measure to review NPS MedicineWise in regard to its government-funded activities.

The formal terms of reference for the review have been released, saying it is expected to provide a "robust evaluation" of the delivery of QUM programs, including an examination of the interactions between NPS MedicineWise and relevant government and non-government agencies involved in broader QUM programs.

"NPS MedicineWise has been receiving Commonwealth funding for over 20 years without a substantial review," the terms of reference note, with the most recent review undertaken in 2017 and sponsored by NPS MedicineWise itself.

The investigation will aim to provide clarity and guidance on NPS MedicineWise's governance, performance, transparency and accountability requirements "and the robustness of evaluations supporting the effectiveness of its activities, including savings claims to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and Medical Benefits Schedule," the Department said.

The review will be undertaken in three parts: one focusing on governance, transparency and

accountability including the impact of the QUM Grant Program on the organisation's VentureWise commercial arm; a second component looking at the delivery of the QUM Grant Program and NPS MedicineWise's long-term sustainability; while part three will focus on savings evaluation methodology and reporting of broader health outcomes.

"The review will also provide options to inform the efficient, flexible and innovative delivery of the QUM Grant Program as well as a robust evaluation of its outcomes and savings," the terms state.

Submissions to the review are due by 24 Jan 2019 via email to NMP@health.gov.au, with the final report to be provided to the Department of Health by 30 Apr.

GSK diagnostics deal

GLAXOSMITHKLINE (GSK) has signed a strategic partnership with Brisbane-based medical diagnostics firm Ellume, which offers systems based on fluorescent nanoparticles called Quantum Dots that enable "real-time detection of common conditions such as influenza, strep throat and chlamydia".

The pact with GSK Consumer Health is believed to focus on respiratory care, according to a report in *The Australian*, with founder Sean Parsons saying the deal would "enable the product to scale into a global market" as well as validating the technology.

A key application of Ellume's point-of-care technology is to reduce antimicrobial resistance by accurately diagnosing whether a virus or bacteria is the cause of a respiratory tract infection.

APP vax workshop

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia is offering its *Vaccination Course for Pharmacists* as a pre-conference workshop in the lead-up to next year's Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference & Trade Exhibition, taking place on the Gold Coast from 07-10 Mar 2019.

The one day course will take place on Wed 06 Mar and will enable pharmacists to qualify as vaccinators and collect up to 24 group 2 CPD points.

The course is open to pharmacists practising in Qld, NSW, the ACT and NT only and costs \$500 for Guild members and \$640 for non-members - for more information email events@qldguild.org.au.

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Dispensary Corner

RESEARCHERS have cracked the code on preventing the annual Christmas weight gain conundrum.

The solution? Unfortunately there's no secret pill: the key is in regular weigh-ins at home, plus simple weight-loss tips, a new study suggests.

The Universities of Birmingham & Loughborough in the UK divided 272 volunteers into two groups, instructing the "intervention" group to weigh themselves regularly and providing them with information on how much exercise was needed to burn the calories in Christmas food.

The comparison group didn't track their weight and were instead given a healthy lifestyle leaflet, which did not include dietary advice.

Lo and behold, the intervention participants ended up weighing 0.5kg less on average than the comparison group.

Time for another 370-calorie slice of Christmas pudding... followed by a 61-minute walk or 32-minute run?

LEGAL action in the USA (where else?) has been launched by a man who claims his pinky finger was caught in an airline armrest mechanism for almost an hour.

Stephen Keys has lodged a case in the Los Angeles Superior Court against American Airlines and its regional operator SkyWest, saying the injury to his finger left him unable to perform routine tasks such as driving and playing with his children.

He's seeking substantial damages due to "weeks of intense pain and severe emotional distress".

Epic Pharmacy union battle

PROFESSIONAL Pharmacists Australia (PPA) has ramped up a campaign negotiating on behalf of pharmacists and technicians working for Epic Pharmacy, this week publicly urging the company's staff to join the union group as it engages in negotiations to improve pay and conditions at the hospital pharmacy provider.

The saga kicked off earlier this year when a majority of Epic staff completed a union survey and "left Epic management with no choice but to bargain with PPA for a new enterprise agreement" rather than operating under individual contracts.

Pharmacists working at Epic sites in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Hervey Bay and the Sunshine Coast have been involved in the process, which has seen five meetings with Epic management over the last few months resulting in a new draft agreement, a draft pharmacists and technicians classifications structure and "a comprehensive log of claims based on member feedback".

However the union group says the

company's management had failed to acknowledge the seriousness of the negotiation process, causing delays to the process while pharmacist wages remain stagnant.

According to posts on the PPA website this week, an offer from the company involves reducing paid maternity leave, cutting long service leave to the legal minimum, as well as reductions to training and development pay, study leave, penalty rates and qualifications allowances.

"Epic want to cut wages and conditions to the bare minimum," PPA said, claiming the hospital pharmacy provider "cannot ignore your claims if the majority of staff are members of your union".

The Epic battle follows a stand-off with ACT Health over hospital pharmacy conditions earlier this year, which resulted in a comprehensive victory for Professional Pharmacists Australia on behalf of its members (**PD** 25 Oct) leading to a new classification structure and "at-risk bonuses".

UK teething move

TEETHING gels containing lidocaine will only be available through pharmacies in the UK from 2019, under a measure announced by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Pharmacists were best placed to provide guidance during teething, and "these medicines should only be used when non-medicinal options do not provide necessary relief," the MHRA said.

A review conducted by the MHRA also recommended updates to safety warnings and instructions.

"Teething is a natural process and lidocaine containing teething products such as teething gels should only be used as a second line of treatment after discussion with and guidance of a healthcare professional," the agency advised.



Events Calendar

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@pharmacydaily.com.au.

22 - 28 Jan: NAPSA Congress; University of South Australia, Adelaide; for more info see: www.napsacongressadelaide19.com

07 - 10 Mar: APP 2019; Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre; early bird registration now open: www.appconference.com

22 - 24 Mar: NSW/ACT Annual Therapeutic Update 2019; Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley; early bird tickets available from 03 Dec: www.psa.org.au/atu

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