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STAND 127

Contrave approval

INOVA Pharmaceuticals has welcomed the TGA approval of its new Contrave weight loss medication, which is a combination of naltrexone and bupropion.

Contrave is indicated, along with a reduced calorie diet and increased physical activity, for the management of weight in adults with obesity, who are overweight and have one or more weight-related co-morbidities.

Contrave was developed by Professor Michael Cowley, head of the Monash Biomedicine Discovery Institute's Department of Physiology, and works on neural pathways involved in the regulation of appetite and food cravings.

Contrave is not PBS-listed, but is available on private prescription and will cost \$230-\$250 per month.

Nicotine course

THE Woolcock Institute of Medical Research is hosting a Nicotine Addiction and Smoking Cessation Training course.

The three day training session hosted by Tobacco Treatment Specialist Renee Bittoun cost \$1,700+GST and takes place 26-28 Mar, 18-20 Jun and 28-30 Oct 2019 - register by **CLICKING HERE**.

First 6CPA claims paid by PPA

THE newly established Pharmacy Programs Administrator (PPA) (**PD** 01 Feb 2018) has advised that the first claims have been received, processed and paid via the new Registration and Claiming Portal.

The site, which debuted last Fri at ppaonline.com.au, is now fully operational and allows pharmacies to lodge claims associated with the 23 Community Pharmacy Programs funded under the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

PPA Director, Chay Boss-Walker, said he was pleased pharmacies and other providers were already taking advantage of the "fast-track" payment arrangements supported by the new portal.

"Australia's pharmacists work hard and our aim is to ensure they're paid promptly for the important services they provide to the community," he said.

The fast track arrangements validate claims in real-time and automatically approve them, with payment made within three business days for Dose Administration Aids, MedsCheck and Diabetes MedsCheck, Staged Supply, Home Medicines Reviews and Quality Use of Medicines.

Boss-Walker reminded users

that their bank details must be entered into the portal by the "Main Authorised Person" before payments can be processed.

Generally this is the pharmacy owner, and if claims have been submitted without bank details being entered the payment will remain as "pending" until the bank information is added.

"The new Portal looks and feels different to the previous Portal, and it may take time for some people to get used to it.

"However we hope that everyone will appreciate the benefits that this new claiming process provides," Boss-Walker added.

The PPA support centre is now fully operational and can be contacted on 1800 951 285 or via support@ppaonline.com.au.

Managing insulin

GUILD Learning & Development has released a new online course to give pharmacists clinical information about Toujeo (insulin glargine 300 units/mL), sponsored by the drug's manufacturer Sanofi.

Toujeo is the first second-generation basal insulin analogue on the PBS - guilded.guild.org.au.

Safety Net orders

THE Federal Department of Human Services has advised it will no longer take phone orders for PBS Safety Net Cards and envelopes effective immediately.

Cards must now be ordered via an online form which must be completed electronically, printed then scanned.

See humanservices.gov.au.

TGA CM guidelines

THE Therapeutic Goods Administration has published updated guidelines on the evidence required to support indications for listed complementary medicines.

While evidence requirements have not changed in the new version, it now includes a list of permitted indications from which AUSTL listed medicines must exclusively draw, incorporating changes to the regulatory framework from listed medicines arising from amendments to the Act in Mar 2018.

The guidelines also now detail the additional "AUSTL(A) assessed listed" pathway providing an option for listed medicines to make higher level indications, when efficacy has been assessed by the TGA.

See www.tga.gov.au.

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Dispensary Corner

IT MAY be time to start selling face paint in the “itch and bite” sector of your pharmacy.

New research published in the journal *Royal Society Open Science* reveals that the use of “striped body painting may be related to protection against dangerous parasitic pests”, such as horseflies.

While it has long been known that the striping on animals such as zebras discouraged horseflies from biting, it has only now been shown that similar striping with body and face paints can also reduce the visual attractiveness of skin to horseflies.

This cultural feature is common to indigenous tribes in Africa, Australia and Papua New Guinea in places where horseflies are widespread.



RESEARCHERS at the University of Edinburgh have come up with a unique new way to make drugs.

They have managed to genetically modify chickens so that they literally “lay medicines,” with their eggs containing clinically significant levels of human proteins, the *BBC* reports.

Although still at early stages, the Roslin Institute scientists said the technique could be used to produce protein-based therapies such as cancer treatments Herceptin and Avastin, at costs literally chickenfeed compared to current manufacturing methods.

Statins for over 75s?

DESPITE a European study last year reporting statins had no benefit in healthy patients aged over 75 years, Australian experts criticised its methodology as flawed and now have the evidence demonstrating that statins do benefit these older age groups.

Health professionals and patients now have “definitive evidence” that “statins are safe, effective and reduce the risk of vascular events in all age groups studied, including those older than 75”, according to an Australian-led review published in the *Lancet*.

The collaboration between Sydney researchers and University of Oxford researchers analysed data from 28 randomised controlled trials involving a total of nearly 187,000 patients, almost 14,500 of whom were over 75.

“Even if risk reduction in people older than 75 years is less than expected, statin therapy may still be justified by a high baseline cardiovascular risk, which is usually present in older people,” said Professor Bernard Cheung of the Queen Mary hospital at the University of Hong Kong.

Guild calls for co-pay cut

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia has called upon the Federal Government to reduce patient co-payments for medicines, to meet its own stated goal of managing the affordability of medicines.

The Guild made the public call releasing its pre-budget submission to the Coalition Government for the 2019-20 Federal Budget.

“Medicine costs are a highly visible out-of-pocket cost, which become more pronounced as Australians age and are likely to become more reliant on medicines,” the Guild says.

“There are 185 million PBS subsidised prescriptions dispensed to concessional patients annually, so the affordability of medicines is of paramount importance to many Australians...the Guild recommends that the 2019-20 Federal Budget improves medicines affordability by removing the optional \$1 discount and reducing the PBS and RPBS co-payments by \$1 for all patients.”

The Guild argues strongly that the \$1 discount policy has failed to result in “an aggregate take-up that has meaningfully contributed to

lower medicine prices”.

In addition, “it has created unfair geographical divergences in the prices that patients with the same health conditions pay for the same subsidised PBS medicines – undermining the universality of the PBS and arbitrarily creating different classes of patients”.

To reinforce the argument, the Guild quotes the Professor Stephen King-led Pharmacy Remuneration and Regulation Review which came to the same conclusion.

Access the submission by visiting the website at guild.org.au.

Guild Update

Medicines in disaster zones

WE'VE certainly been enduring a bad bushfire season, and our thoughts go to our Tasmanian colleagues who are the latest to face the threat and disruption of fires across a broad part of the State. Pharmacists play a critical role in ensuring continuity of supply of medicines during natural disasters – with lost or destroyed prescriptions and identification, limited or no access to funds, and pharmacies damaged, closed or destroyed.

There is information regarding access to medicines and PBS prescription provisions during disasters on the Guild website (member log in required). Maintaining consumer access to medicines in an emergency? www.guild.org.au/resources/pharmacy-issues/emergency-management.

Win with Hawaiian Tropic

Everyday this week Pharmacy Daily and Hawaiian Tropic are giving away a Silk Hydration prize pack to the value of \$45.

Let your senses take you with the NEW Hawaiian Tropic Silk Hydration range. A sunscreen that pampers you like no ordinary sunscreen! The range offers 12 hours of moisturisation while providing broad spectrum UVA/UVB protection, leaving your skin with a non-greasy, silky skin feel and the brand's signature mango and papaya scent.

Visit www.hawaiiantropicsun.com.au to find out more.

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

Which Hawaiian Tropic Silk Hydration product received the 4.5 out of 5 star rating by Beauty Heaven?

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Tony Soffer.

