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Chemist Warehouse free scripts plan

CHEMIST Warehouse's plans to bring its free prescription offer from New Zealand to Australia is being stymied by "another fake narrative" from the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the group's Chief Operating Officer, Mario Tascone, claims.

Continuing its push for changes to Pharmacy Ownership and Location regulations, Chemist Warehouse, hit out at rules preventing the group from offering discounted Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) listed medicines.

Tascone told *News Corp* that Chemist Warehouse could scrap the \$6.50 concessional and \$40.30 general patient PBS co-payment on a number of medicines, if legislation was amended, noting the discounter would accept the Government subsidy and dispensing fee, while not charging patients.

"We probably couldn't do it for everything, but we could do it for select drugs," he said.

A Guild spokesperson said that while the organisation supported to reduce the cost of medicines for Australians, it did not back Chemist Warehouse's free script plan.

"We do not support a zero-co-payment except where a concessional patient reaches the safety net after 60 scripts (soon to be reduced to 48 scripts)," the spokesperson said.

"We do not believe it improves our subsidised medicine system to have the Government-determined co-payment used as a lever of competition.

"The medicine payment systems in Australia and New Zealand have significant differences and are not directly comparable.

"As for Chemist Warehouse, it is a standard big corporate ploy to seek to destroy small competitors through 'loss leader' prices and then raise prices again once they dominate the market.

"We believe free scripts as a marketing ploy commoditises medicines, reduces quality use of medicines and encourages hoarding and wastage."

Tascone told *Pharmacy Daily* the Guild's response to the group's proposal was "so absurd it really doesn't deserve a response".

"Most people will see this response for what it is...just another fake narrative (one of



many) put out by the Guild to try and discredit anyone whose views differ to them," he said.

Tascone declined to provide any information regarding what molecules would be dispensed without a co-payment.

However the Guild spokesperson warned that patients would need to "beware of the fine print" on any free prescription offer.

"We're about protecting the best subsidised medicines scheme in the world," the spokesperson said.

"To ensure it isn't gamed by spivs."

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today has three pages of news plus the MIMS Monthly Update.

Guild ED looks to female future

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia's new Executive Director, Suzanne Greenwood (pictured), will focus on how the profession's strong female workforce can drive pharmacy forward, when she delivers the Judy Liauw Address at the Pharmacy Connect conference in Sydney on Sat.

Writing in the Guild's *Forefront* newsletter yesterday, Greenwood said "I will be considering how we leverage that [female workforce and ownership group] into the future".

In a video introducing herself to the profession, Greenwood said that she wanted to build on the "unique role and presence of community pharmacy."

CLICK HERE for the video.



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AUSTRALIAN MEDICINES HANDBOOK

Award-winning SafeScript

SAFESCRIPT has won an Australian Information Industry Association award.

The Victorian real-time prescription monitoring system was honoured for innovation and excellence in the category of Infrastructure and Platforms Innovation of the Year.

Developers, the Fred IT Group, congratulated the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services for SafeScript, which addresses the problem of accidental misuse of prescription medications by providing clinicians with alerts based on the real-time monitoring of prescription data captured via the electronic transfer of prescriptions through eRx Script Exchange and MediSecure.

The first clinicians started using SafeScript during patient consultations last year (PD 02 Oct 18), with over 57,000 alerts having been sent out across Victoria since.

"As pharmacists, we continue to see the devastating toll that occurs in the community as a result of the misuse of prescription medications," Fred IT Group CEO, Paul Naismith, said.

"With last week's release of the

Australian Overdose Report, we know that the number of deaths occurring through accidental overdose continues to grow (PD 28 Aug).

"We applaud the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services for taking leadership on this vital issue.

"We can already see the evidence in terms of how many people SafeScript is helping...it is gratifying to see SafeScript being recognised for its role in reducing clinical risk for vulnerable Victorians and, now through the national data exchange, available to all Australians."

Telstra owns 50% of Fred IT Group alongside the Pharmacy Guild, and Telstra Health Managing Director, Mary Foley, said, "SafeScript is one of Fred's and Telstra Health's great successes, partnering with governments, clinicians and pharmacists to reduce the incidence of opioid and other controlled substance abuse, preventing avoidable deaths."

After initial trials of the platform, SafeScript became a full statewide Victorian initiative just over five months ago (PD 02 Apr).

Retired doc charged over sexual assault

DISGRACED former Sydney-based gynaecologist/obstetrician, Richard Ian Reid, has been charged over eight alleged sexual assaults of a patient in his care over a five-year period.

Reid was disqualified from holding registration for a minimum of five years in Sep 2018, after being found guilty of professional misconduct relating to inappropriate clinical practices, by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

The patient came forward in Nov 2018, reporting the now 77-year-old specialist had assaulted her during a series of consultations at his Edgecliff practice between 2010 and 2014.

The retired doctor, attended Waverley Police Station on Mon 02 Sep, where he was arrested



and charged.

A Waverley District Court magistrate granted bail at a hearing on Tue, on surety of \$50,000.

Reid must reside at an address on the NSW Central Coast, report to Toukley Police Station daily, surrender his passport and not approach any international ports of departure, as a condition of his bail.

Pharmacy pseudoscience slammed

MEDICAL professionals are continuing to hit out against the push to expand pharmacists's scope of practice as negotiations for the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA) get underway.

One rural GP trainee from NSW blasted the profession on Twitter after going to a pharmacy to get a script filled for an antibiotic to treat tonsillitis.

"I was offered garlic, zinc, echinacea tablets and lozenges that cost almost quadruple the antibiotic I was prescribed," she said.

"And that is why I don't support #pharmacy prescribing."

Australian Medical Association (AMA) Western Australia President, Dr Andrew Miller, slammed the promotion of non-



evidence-based products.

"#Pharmacists - professional university trained scientists not paid enough for their core work - e.g. pay them more to supervise opiates properly," he said.

"Patients are sick of up-sell and pseudoscience.

"GPs don't want 'help' with triage and diagnostics, [they] do want collaboration on prescribing. #disruptGuild".

Bald-faced ripoff

THE Federal Court has found that, from 2014 to 2017, hair loss business Ashley & Martin (A&M) signed up more than 25,000 customers to its 'Personal RealGROWTH Program' using three different standard form contracts, which have all been found to contain unfair terms, and have now been declared void.

Customers were typically signed up to a 12-month program, with terms stipulating full payment before patients received treatment.

MM2019 program

THE Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia's (SHPA) Medicines Management 2019 (MM2019) program has been fully accredited, ahead of its commencement on 14 Nov.

The largest scientific pharmacy conference in the country, this year's event will be the 45th, and there is only two weeks before the end of Early Bird registration.

SHPA CEO, Kristin Michaels, said the Society was "thrilled to see more Group 2-accredited sessions than ever before."

CLICK HERE for Early Bird registration.



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Dispensary Corner

AN AGGRESSIVE rooster has been blamed for the tragic death of a rural Australian woman, who succumbed after losing too much blood when pecked on a varicose vein. Reported last month in the *Forensic Science, Medicine and Pathology* journal, the "fatal rooster attack" occurred while the unfortunate lady was in the process of collecting eggs from her chicken coop.

An autopsy revealed two small, deep cuts on her leg, one of which was above a large varicose vein and led to a "significant haemorrhage".

Co-author Roger Byard from the University of Adelaide said the case highlighted "the vulnerability of elderly folk with varicose veins to minor trauma, even from a rooster peck".

NEIGHBOURS of a vegan woman in Perth have been battling legal action over complaints they are deliberately trying to bother her by barbecuing meat and fish in their back yard.

The Supreme Court of Western Australia considered the case brought by Cilla Carden, which also cited annoyances over the family's children playing basketball.

Channel Nine quoted her as saying "it's deliberate...all I can smell is fish," but the court disagreed, dismissing the case.

The issue had already been considered by the WA State Administrative Tribunal, which ruled the neighbours were simply "living in their back yard and their home as a family."

Pharmacy's Brexit plan



BRITISH pharmacists are urging the Government to use Brexit funding to support a new pharmacist-led service to prevent medicine shortages ahead of the UK's impending crash out of the European Union.

The Pharmacist Defence Association (PDA) wrote to the Chancellor, Sajid Javid, outlining its proposal to give pharmacists more time to have detailed discussions with millions of patients about their use of medicines, as concerns about medicines shortages mount.

The proposal was developed in response to a report from Age UK, which revealed one-in-five British pensioners takes seven pills a day, with many being given unnecessary medications.

"If we take the opportunity to reduce unnecessary supplies of medicine, it would not only relieve the pressure on the supply chain but would deliver long-term sustainable benefits to patients, many of whom are currently subjected to chronic over-prescribing of medicines," PDA said.

Win with ULTRASENSITIVE

This week Pharmacy Daily and ecostore are giving readers the chance to win a prize pack of products from ecostore's ULTRASENSITIVE home and body range, valued at over \$50.

Convert your home to an asthma and allergy-aware space with ecostore's ULTRASENSITIVE home and body range, approved by Sensitive Choice for Australians with sensitivities. [CLICK HERE](#) for more.

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

Name 3 products that are a part of ecostore's ULTRASENSITIVE home and body care range.

Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Laura Forte.



Travel Specials

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* travel feature. Each week we highlight a couple of great travel deals for the pharmacy industry, brought to you by *Flo Travel Nasal Spray*.



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Escape to Vomo

FIJI'S spectacular Vomo Island luxury resort today announced a limited time special offer, with a complimentary room upgrade and two free nights under a "Stay 7 Pay 5" deal.

The bargain is valid for travel between 13 Oct and 21 Dec 2019, and 01 Feb-31 Mar 2020.

A five night minimum applies, and stays must be booked by 30 Sep with the code UPGRADE - see your travel agent or vomofiji.com.

Fly free to Europe

AUSTRALIAN travellers can now fly free to Europe in conjunction with the launch of Silversea Cruises' new 2020 all-inclusive collection.

A total of 83 voyages are on offer across five ships, including the brand new *Silver Moon*, with business class upgrades also now available from just \$3,998 per person.

See your travel agent for more details.

New Products

- **Clindamycin (as phosphate)/tretinoin (Acnatac)** combines clindamycin, a bacteriostatic semisynthetic derivative of lincomycin, and tretinoin, which has comedolytic, anti-comedogenic and anti-inflammatory effects. Acnatac is indicated for the topical treatment of acne vulgaris when comedones, papules and pustules are present in patients 12 years or older. Acnatac is contraindicated in patients hypersensitive to lincomycin; with regional enteritis, ulcerative colitis, pustular and deep cystic nodular acne varieties (acne conglobate and acne fulminans); with a history of antibiotic-associated colitis, acute eczemas, rosacea and perioral dermatitis; or in women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy. Acnatac gel contains clindamycin (as phosphate) 1% w/w and tretinoin 0.025% w/w, and is available in 30 g and 60 g tubes.
- **Fluticasone furoate (Arnuity Ellipta)** is a synthetic trifluorinated corticosteroid with potent anti-inflammatory activity. Arnuity Ellipta is indicated for the maintenance treatment of asthma in patients 5 years or older. It is contraindicated in patients with severe milk-protein allergy and in the primary treatment of status asthmaticus or other acute episodes of asthma where intensive measures are required. Arnuity Ellipta inhaler contains 30 blisters of 100 mcg or 200 mcg fluticasone furoate and is available in a pack size of 1.
- **Naloxone (as hydrochloride dihydrate) (Nyxoid)** is a specific opioid antagonist that acts competitively at opioid receptors. It reveals very high affinity for the opioid receptor sites and displaces both opioid agonists and partial antagonists. Nyxoid is indicated in adults and children, intended as part of the emergency treatment, for known or suspected opioid overdose as manifested by respiratory and/or central nervous system depression in the home or other non-medical setting, or a health facility setting. For this reason, Nyxoid should be carried by persons at risk of, or likely to witness such events. Nyxoid is not a substitute for emergency medical care. Nyxoid nasal spray contains 1.8 mg/actuation naloxone in a pack size of 2 single doses.

New Presentation

- **Paracetamol/ibuprofen (as sodium dihydrate) (Maxigesic IV)** is now available as a 100 mL solution for infusion containing 1000 mg paracetamol and 300 mg ibuprofen (as sodium dihydrate).

New Indications

- **Budesonide/formoterol fumarate dihydrate (Symbicort)** is now indicated in patients 12 years and older for the treatment of asthma, to achieve overall asthma control, including the relief of symptoms and the reduction of the risk of exacerbations according to different treatment approaches: anti-inflammatory reliever therapy in patients with mild disease (200/6 only), anti-inflammatory reliever plus maintenance therapy (100/6 and 200/6 only), or maintenance therapy.
- **Icatibant (as acetate) (Firazyr)** is now indicated for symptomatic treatment of acute attacks of hereditary angioedema in patients aged 2 years and older with C1-esterase-inhibitor deficiency.
- **Influenza virus vaccine, surface antigen, quadrivalent (inactivated) (Influvac Tetra)** is now indicated for the prevention of influenza, caused by influenza virus types A and B, in patients aged 3 years and older.
- **Pembrolizumab (rch) (Keytruda)** is now indicated in adult and paediatric patients for the treatment of unresectable or metastatic, microsatellite instability-high (MSI-H) or mismatch repair deficient (dMMR) colorectal cancer (that has progressed following treatment with a fluoropyrimidine, oxaliplatin, and irinotecan) or non-colorectal tumours (that have progressed following prior treatment and when there are no satisfactory alternative treatment options). The safety and effectiveness of Keytruda in paediatric patients with MSI-H central nervous system cancers have not been established.
- **Pomalidomide (Pomalyst)**, in combination with bortezomib and dexamethasone, is now indicated for the treatment of patients with relapsed or refractory multiple myeloma who have received at least one prior treatment regimen including lenalidomide; and, in combination with dexamethasone, for the treatment of patients with relapsed and refractory multiple myeloma who have received at least two prior treatment regimens, including both lenalidomide and bortezomib, and have demonstrated disease progression on the last therapy.
- **Romiplostim (rbe) (Nplate)** is now indicated for the treatment of thrombocytopenia in patients aged 1 year and older with chronic immune (idiopathic) thrombocytopenic purpura who are non-splenectomised and have had an inadequate response, or are intolerant, to corticosteroids and immunoglobulins; who are splenectomised and have had an inadequate response to splenectomy.

New Contraindications

- **Adapalene/benzoyl peroxide (Epiduo and Epiduo Forte)** is now contraindicated in women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy.
- **Carbimazole (Neo-Mercazole)** is now contraindicated in patients with a history of acute pancreatitis after administration of carbimazole or its active metabolite thiamazole.
- **Dabigatran etexilate (as dabigatran etexilate mesilate) (Pradaxa)** is now contraindicated with concomitant glecaprevir/pibrentasvir.
- **Telmisartan/amlodipine (as besilate) (Twynsta)** is now contraindicated in severe hypotension; obstruction of the outflow tract of the left ventricle (e.g. high grade aortic stenosis); and in haemodynamically unstable heart failure after acute myocardial infarction.