

No point in cynical wish list says Guild

Nick O'Donoghue

SUGGESTIONS that pharmacy's peak bodies should lobby the independent king-makers of politics has been described as cynical.

While Tamworth pharmacist Patrick Mahony told *Pharmacy eNews* that a wish list should be drawn up for the independents, Pharmacy Guild of Australia president Kos Scavos said it would be counter productive to approach them at this stage.

"The general view pharmacists need to understand would be anyone who approaches them now, they will more than likely just ignore.

"There's a general attitude that 'if I wasn't good enough to be consulted before the election, why should I be consulted now,' so that's why the Guild does the hard work and speaks to these people before they're in these positions.

"At this stage the Guild won't be approaching them, because that would be a very cynical move," Mr Scavos said.

"The lesson for me and the



INDEPENDENTS: Should pharmacy make a wish list for independents?

Guild is that determined extensive lobbying is rewarded in the long term.

"While many special interest groups failed to consult the three key independents, the Guild has consulted and has established strong long-standing relationships with them," he said.

A former president of the Rural and Isolated Pharmacists Association (RIPA), Mr Mahony added the strong lobbying position held by the rural-based independent MPs could help boost health services in remote areas.

"This is a real opportunity now that when they sit down and talk about things that it [rural health care] does come up," he said.

With the introduction of mandatory continuing professional development under the Pharmacy Board of Australia, Mr Mahony believes something needs to be done to level the playing field for pharmacists working in rural and remote areas.

"If somebody in Sydney can work until 6pm, go home, see the kids then go out to an educational course at 8pm and be home by 10 and get two points, whereas someone from Manilla has to drive to Sydney, get two days locum cover, accommodation and so on to get those same two points, that doesn't make the requirement on the city pharmacist the same as the requirement on the country pharmacist.

"GPs have got divisions of general practice, which are funded. Within those they have training co-ordinators, they've got locum replacements and all the doctors get paid to go to various bits and pieces whereas pharmacists don't get the same incentives," he said.

To comment [click here](#).

Diabetes education reduces costs

Nick O'Donoghue

HEALTH services can save money by providing structured education programs teaching newly diagnosed patients with type 2 diabetes how to self manage their condition, a new study reveals.

The research, published in the *British Journal of Medicine*, found a six-hour group education program delivered by professional health care educators was more cost effective compared with "usual care".

The 12 month analysis of the intervention involved 50,000

patients, with significant benefits coming from the reduction in smoking rates as a result of the program.

"The most economically significant benefits of the program are reductions in overall cardiovascular risk, leading to greater survival," the researchers said.

During the study the education program cost £203 (\$354) per patient, but researchers estimated it would cost £79 (\$138) in a "real world" setting.

"Our results suggest the

intervention is likely to be cost effective compared with usual care, especially with respect to the current cost of the intervention to primary care," they said.

The results of the program showed people attending the sessions were encouraged to decide their own goals including weight loss and smoking cessation.

"These outcomes were both significantly improved in the trial and were the most important drivers in the economic analysis," they said.

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Aspirin recommendation for pregnant women

Nick O'Donoghue

A DAILY dose of aspirin is now being advised for pregnant women at risk of developing pre-eclampsia in the UK.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) made its recommendation in the August edition of its clinical guidelines for the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Royal College of Midwives.

The **guide** suggested women who have previously suffered hypertension during a previous

pregnancy or who have chronic kidney disease, diabetes (type 1 or 2) or an autoimmune disease should take a daily dose of 75mg of aspirin a day to reduce the risk of pre-eclampsia.

NICE also recommended aspirin be given if the woman is having a multiple birth, if it is her first child or if she has a body mass index (BMI) greater than 35.

The guideline warns against giving women drugs called angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors and angiotensin II receptor blockers (ARBs), which



NICE: New guidelines for hypertension in pregnant women.

can increase the risk of congenital abnormalities if taken during pregnancy.

Ultrasounds should also be

used to assess a range of issues, including whether the baby is growing normally and the volume of amniotic fluid surrounding the baby.

Women with pre-eclampsia should be told to keep - or achieve - a healthy BMI before their next pregnancy.

Restricting salt intake, or taking dietary supplements such as magnesium or vitamins C and E, will not help prevent high blood pressure in pregnancy, the guideline adds.

To comment [click here](#).

COMMENTS

PHARMACY WAGES [\(LINK\)](#)

I have recently been registered and agree with what others have commented about our industry. There is undoubtedly oversupply of students, graduates and pharmacists. I found it difficult to locate a pre-reg position and applied to over 40 pharmacies. I took the first offer. It's disgusting how low the pre-reg wages were.

Since then, I've been registered for about six months and everyday I think about leaving the pharmacy profession and I'm sure many others have considered it. I work for one of the largest groups but get paid one of the lowest wages \$30/hr.

I know that's above minimum wage (\$24/hr) but I was locuming at more than 10 locations across brisbane and outskirts of brisbane (up to two hours away) doing more than 50 hrs/wk. What's their excuse... there's too many pharmacists.

Fred

MEDICINES LINE [\(LINK\)](#)

The reason consumers call the Medicines Line is that in many cases

they do not receive the response that they are looking for from their community pharmacy.

Many are phoning for another opinion. The previous Medicines Line was also very useful for community pharmacists to refer some rather persistent consumers who had exhausted the resources of the community pharmacist.

"Nurses to work in pharmacies for two to three days - to see what pharmacists do", and so they can do the job that pharmacists spend five years training to do!

Pharmacists are trained to communicate to consumers and other health professionals appropriate evidence based information about medicines and drug-related problems.

We must move forward, work in a team with general practitioners, practice nurses and other health professionals and demonstrate our expertise or pharmacists will cease to exist.

This happens in the hospital setting.

Jenny Gowan PhD

BRIEFS

VIOXX CLASS ACTION

It's the final day for Australians who suffered a heart attack after taking the arthritis drug Vioxx to join a class action against the drug's maker.

Vioxx was withdrawn from sale globally in 2004 following concerns over its side effects .. and Australia's Federal Court ruled earlier this year it could double a person's risk of heart attack.

Law firm Slater & Gordon says Australians negatively affected by the recalled drug have until today to add their names to a group legal bid for compensation.

People wanting to take part in the legal action, or seeking more information, should call 1800 555 777 or email vioxx@slatergordon.com.au.

PHARMACY'S SHINING ROSE

A pharmacist made it to the finals of Ireland's most popular "lovely girls" pageant, the Rose of Tralee, this week.

Representing the English city of Liverpool, 24-year-old Aine Shine

took the week off dispensing to sing in the unique talent competition for young women of Irish heritage.

Australian health workers' interest in the pageant focused on Royal Darwin Hospital nurse, Valerie O'Halloran and occupational therapist Aisling Ryan who represented Queensland.

COFFERS FILLED BY COUGHERS

A Bisolvon Chesty Cough poll has shown the majority of people would support 'on-the-spot' fines for inconsiderate coughers.

Community pharmacist, Gerald Quigley, says the poll results reflect the public's attitude toward the mismanagement of coughs and highlights the need for greater public health awareness.

"I know that some might see the concept of 'on-the-spot' fines as a bit extreme, but this is clearly an important public health issue.

"It's common sense to cover up but some people seem to need a little further push to do this," he said.