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Marci Wood, Editor

Vermont News

Local Pharmacy Robberies

Police are searching for three suspects of recent pharmacy robberies. On January 5th, the Osco Pharmacy in the Berlin Shaws was robbed by a white male wearing a green jacket, between 5'8"-5'10" tall. The CVS Pharmacy in Berlin was robbed on January 13th.



Berlin CVS Pharmacy robbery suspect

According to the police report, the suspect gave the pharmacy on duty a note and fled with an undisclosed amount

of narcotics. The suspect is described as a white male between 5'11" to 6'2" tall. The Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy in Barre City was robbed on January 21st. The suspect is a white male, around 5'10" tall, and between 150-175 lbs. Anyone with information about any of the robberies is asked to contact the Berlin Police Department at (802) 223-4401 or the Barre City Police Department at (802) 476-6613.

Prices Soar for Some Generic Drugs in Vermont and throughout the US

In November of 2013, the Vermont Public Radio [reported](#) on the problem of rising prices for generic drugs with information provided by Vermont pharmacist members of the VPA.

This issue has also been [recognized nationally](#), with reports of price increases of over 100 percent for some generic drugs, such as benazepril, clomipramine, digoxin, divalproex, doxycycline, budesonide, haloperidol and levothyroxine. The importance of generic drug availability is highlighted by the statistic that use of generics saved \$217 billion for the United States healthcare system in 2012 alone, and approximately \$1.2 trillion from 2003 to 2012. According to Ralph Neas, the CEO of The Generic Pharmaceutical Association, the prices of generic medications reflect supply and demand but producers of generic drugs cannot increase production immediately like manufacturers of other products can.

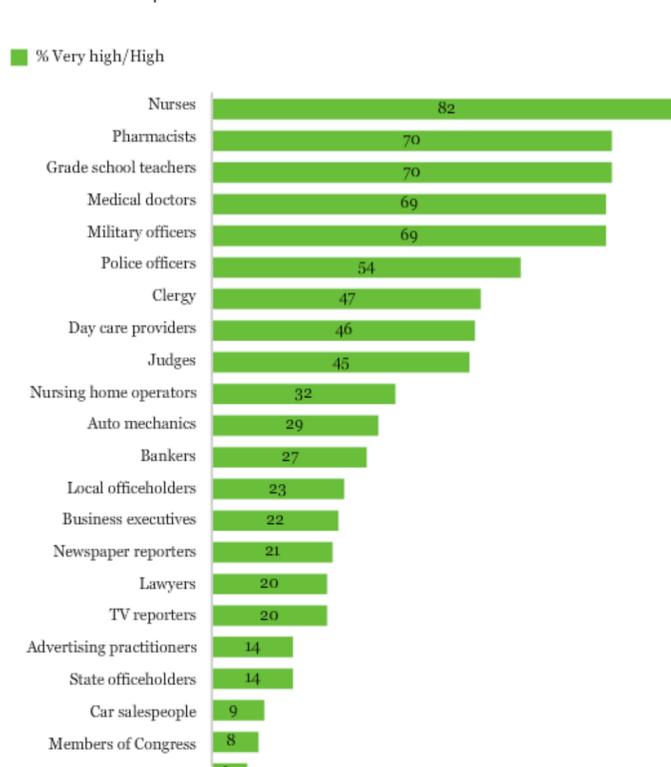
National Pharmacy News

US Judge Rules Against OxyContin Patent Infringement

Earlier this month, a US judge ruled that generic drug manufacturer Teva did not infringe on six patents of Purdue Pharma's OxyContin. Teva's generic oxycodone product was pulled from the market around 5 years ago due to this patent infringement accusation. Purdue Pharma lost the case when Teva proved some of the patents were obvious and the others were not infringed upon. Purdue plans to appeal this decision. Another generic version will be available soon, as Purdue Pharma and Actavis reached an agreement allowing Actavis to sell fixed quantities of oxycodone beginning in January.

Pharmacists Ranked as 2nd Most Trusted Profession

In the annual Gallup poll surveying opinions of honesty and ethics in professions, pharmacists were the second most trusted profession with 70% of Americans rating pharmacists as having "high" or "very high" honesty and ethical standards. This is down slightly from an all-time high of 75% last year. The pharmacy profession has consistently ranked high in the Gallup poll, and this is the third year in a row that pharmacists have been ranked second.



Source: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1654/honesty-ethics-professions.aspx#1>

Farxiga Approved for Type 2 Diabetes

The FDA has approved dapagliflozin (Farxiga, Bristol-Myers Squibb and AstraZeneca) to treat type 2 diabetes. Dapagliflozin is a selective sodium-glucose co-transporter 2 inhibitor, and is the second of this type of drug to be approved by the FDA along with canagliflozin (Invokana). These drugs are not recommended for patients with active bladder cancer; elderly patients with impaired renal function and patients on diuretics to treat other conditions may have an increased risk of renal failure. The most common side effects associated with dapagliflozin were genital mycotic infections and urinary tract infections.

ISENTRESS Receives FDA Approval for Pediatric Oral Suspension

The integrase inhibitor ISENTRESS (raltegravir, Merck) has received FDA approval for a new pediatric formulation oral suspension. With this approval, ISENTRESS is now indicated for use with other antiretrovirals in the treatment of HIV-1 in patients as young as four weeks of age that weigh at least 3 kg to less than 20 kg. According to Merck, the new formulation is expected to be available in the US during the third quarter of 2014.

H1N1 Predominant Strain in Current Flu Outbreaks

The CDC reports that the H1N1 (2009 influenza A) is the predominant strain of influenza virus circulating currently in the United States. This is the same strain that emerged in 2009 causing the flu pandemic, and according to the CDC this is the first flu season since 2009 that H1N1 has circulated in levels as high as during the pandemic. All current vaccines protect against the H1N1 strain, and the CDC emphasizes the importance of vaccination for all individuals 6 months and older that are able to receive the vaccine. During the 2012-2013 flu season, vaccination prevented an estimated 6.6 million cases of the flu, however in November of 2013 only 40% of Americans reported having already received the vaccine. The CDC suggests that vaccination should remain available until the end of the flu season, when the virus is no longer spreading.

Study Finds 10% of Teens Report Opioid or Sedative Misuse

A recent study published in the journal *Pediatrics* found that 10.4% of the 2,135 adolescents ages 14 to 20 participating in this study that visited the University of Michigan Emergency Department reported use of either opioids or sedatives for nonmedical reasons. Further, 3.65% reported misuse of both substances. Adolescents that reported substance abuse during their emergency department visit were significantly more likely to have required emergency care in the past year ($P < 0.01$). Other significant correlates of opioid or sedative misuse included receipt of public assistance, marijuana use, alcohol misuse, nonprescription cough or cold medication misuse, and drinking and driving or riding with a drinking driver. Only 14.7% of adolescents that reported misusing opioids and 12.3% of reported sedative abusers had a current prescription for the drug.

Pharmacists can support efforts to reduce substance abuse by adolescents through participation in prescription drug monitoring programs and education of patients about the risks of prescription drug misuse. With the knowledge that prescription drugs are frequently misused by adolescents, pharmacists can discuss ways to prevent drug diversion with patients prescribed opiates or sedatives and encourage patients with concerns about prescription drug abuse to talk with a pharmacist or other health care provider.

Online Refill System Improved Statin Adherence

Online patient portals were the focus of a study published online in *Medical Care* in December 2013. These portals, sometimes referred to as shared medical records or personal health records, give patients the ability to schedule appointments, view lab results, and request prescription refills online. Results of the study showed that the diabetic patient participants who used the online refill system, either for all refills or occasionally, showed improved adherence to their statin use. Patients that did not use the portal showed unchanged adherence levels. The study authors suggest that the convenience of requesting online refills may have led to the improvement in adherence, and highlight the system's potential benefits for patients with chronic diseases.

Please note our mailing address:

Vermont Pharmacists Association
P.O. Box 818
Milton, Vermont 05468