



Australian Self-Medication Industry Inc
Suite 2203, Level 22, 141 Walker Street,
North Sydney NSW 2060
PO Box 764, North Sydney NSW 2059
Ph +61 2 9922 5111 Fax +61 2 9959 3693
Email: info@asmi.com.au www.asmi.com.au
ABN 55 082 798 952

25 August 2011

MEDIA STATEMENT

Medicines scheduling decisions aim to maintain or improve consumer access to much-needed treatments

The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI), the industry body representing non-prescription consumer healthcare products today welcomed a number of interim scheduling decisions that should maintain or improve consumer access to some widely-used over-the-counter (OTC) medicines.

The interim decisions were announced by the delegate of the Secretary to the Department of Health and Aging (the Delegate), and take into account recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Medicines Scheduling (ACMS). They are subject to review, based on further submissions by parties who had already made submissions to the ACMS.

Cough and Cold Preparations

The delegate decided that there should be no change to the scheduling of all twenty of the active ingredients under consideration. Instead age-based restrictions will be implemented through regulatory activities undertaken by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

The Executive Director of ASMI, Dr Deon Schoombie welcomed the decision, saying it would ensure that parents and carers continued to have access to cough and cold products that have been widely available for many years.

“ASMI has worked cooperatively with the TGA throughout this process, and is pleased that there has been a sensible and balanced outcome. ASMI looks forward to continuing this approach during the implementation of any new regulatory requirements.”

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

ASMI welcomes the decision to exempt additional NRT formats from scheduling.

“NRT has been demonstrated to be a very effective method of helping people to quit smoking. This decision will allow these additional NRT formats to be available, not only in pharmacy, but in grocery outlets along with other forms of NRT already available there.

“Given the focus of government on tackling smoking as one of our leading public health issues, this recommendation makes a lot of sense,” Dr Schoombie said.

Loperamide

ASMI also welcomed the recommendation to exempt small packs of Loperamide from scheduling. Loperamide is an anti-diarrhoeal treatment currently available OTC. This decision means that consumers will now be able to purchase small packs from a wider range of retail outlets in addition to pharmacies.

Rabeprazole

However, ASMI is disappointed with the decision to disallow advertising to the public of the OTC proton pump inhibitor, Rabeprazole (Pariet). This follows a previous rejection by the delegate of advertising of OTC Pantoprazole (Somac) earlier this year.

“These decisions make it very hard for consumers to be made aware that medicines are now available from pharmacists without prescription, and keeping this information from consumers does not appear to serve any useful public health purpose ” Dr Schoombie said.

About ASMI: The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI) is the peak industry body for the Australian self care industry representing consumer healthcare products including over-the-counter medicines and complementary medicines. ASMI’s mission is to promote better health through responsible self-care. This means ensuring that safe and effective self-care products are readily available to all Australians at a reasonable cost. ASMI works to encourage responsible use by consumers and an increasing role for cost-effective self-medication products as part of the broad national health strategy. www.asmi.com.au

Media contact: Bob Bowden, Foresight Communications (02) 9241 2811, 0412 753 298