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1 October 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

UK government health reform agency to advise on faster access to medicines

Measures to slash red tape in the regulation of medicines will be high on the agenda when the UK government official charged with improving the country's health regulation meets government officials and industry leaders at the Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI) national conference in November.

Chris Horsey is the Head of Better Regulation in the UK Department of Health, the unit that is transforming regulation of medicines through what's known as the Better Regulation of Medicines Initiative (BROMI).

BROMI is a ground-breaking program designed to strip away unnecessary regulatory burdens on medicine that have been incrementally added over four decades.

It is led by the UK regulatory agency for therapeutic products, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and is a collaboration of industry, health professionals and government.

"The outcome has been to deliver new and updated medicines to patients faster, minimise the burden on industry and free up industry and the regulator to focus on innovation and safety," Chris Horsey said.

The Executive Director of ASMI, Juliet Seifert said the UK experience provides a valuable insight into one way of addressing the red tape burden that can accumulate and end up restricting the public's access to medicines.

"If some of the lessons from the UK can be picked up in Australia, we will have a better chance of bringing products to market more rapidly and having safe and proven prescription only medicines made available over-the-counter," Ms Seifert said.

The UK approach applies different regulatory models in different circumstances; the key principle being that the regulatory impact should be proportionate to the risk. This enables the MHRA to better focus its expertise on important public health issues rather than routine administrative work.

The MHRA says, "If we are to make the very best use of the potential offered by pharmacists, we must give them the tools to do the job. That includes completing further reclassifications to complete the range of products in the therapeutic categories available for the treatment of conditions pharmacists have traditionally been involved in."

The ASMI conference will also hear from the Assistant Minister for Deregulation, Craig Emerson.

The ASMI Conference, with a theme of *“Self Care: How Much Is Your Responsibility?”* will be held on Thursday 12 November at Australian Technology Park, Redfern. Other speakers and panellists include:

- **Carol Bennett**, Executive Director, Consumers’ Health Forum of Australia (CHF)
- **Prof Alan Bensoussan**, Executive Director, National Institute of Complementary Medicine (NICM)
- **Mario Capanna**, Cincotta Chemist
- **Simon Corah**, CEO, Growth Mantra will host the 2009 ASMI Sales and Marketing Awards
- **Li Cunxin**, dancer, stockbroker & author of the inspirational autobiography *Mao’s Last Dancer* - movie due for release in late 2009.
- **Bill Curtis**, Managing Director, Curtis Jones & Brown as Master of Ceremonies
- **Odette Gourley**, Partner, Corrs Chambers Westgarth
- **Dr Tony Hobbs**, Chair, National Primary Health Care Strategy External Reference Group
- **Prof Stephen Leeder**, Director, Menzies Centre for Health Policy (MCHP)
- **Steven Mann**, Marketing Director Asia Pacific, sanofi-aventis Consumer Healthcare
- **Cavan Redmond**, President, Wyeth Consumer Healthcare and Animal Health Businesses (USA)
- **Michael Smith**, Head of the Office of Complementary Medicines, Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)
- **Dr Linda Suydam**, President, Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA), ASMI’s US equivalent
- **Dr Norman Swan**, ABC Radio National’s Health Report

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

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