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MEDIA STATEMENT

Global expert calls for rescheduling of prescription medicines as key element in bold reform of health system

The chance to switch medicines from prescription-only to over-the-counter (OTC) status represents one of the biggest opportunities in consumer healthcare, according to Nicholas Hall, a global OTC expert, and one of the speakers at the upcoming Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI) Conference.

“The next generation of prescription-to-OTC switches will underpin profound changes in the healthcare system and will alter the way consumers interact with healthcare professionals,” he said.

“In future we will see switches for chronic, progressive, recurring or symptomless conditions, each with its own challenges.

“Switches can make a major contribution to public health by increasing access to new self care treatments. They affect many people including patients, consumers, doctors, pharmacists, governments and employers to name a few.

“All switches have issues as patients will be diverted from the doctor to the retailer or pharmacist so objections must be identified and answered with data to demonstrate a positive benefit,” he said.

He warns that successful switches entail a major investment of resources by manufacturers and involve the formidable task of creating and building an OTC brand in the retail marketplace.

Nicholas Hall is one of a range of speakers who will examine various aspects of Self Care as part of the Australian health system at the ASMI conference.

His Australian appearance follows a ground-breaking conference in New Jersey in September, “How to Succeed in Rx-to-OTC Switch”. The conference examined regulatory, commercial, consumer and marketing aspects of prescription to OTC switches.

The ASMI conference, *Integrating Self Care into the Healthcare System*, will be held on Wednesday 19 November at Australian Technology Park Redfern.

Other speakers and panellists include:

- **Senator Jan McLucas**, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health & Ageing
- **Dr Rohan Hammett**, Therapeutic Goods Administration

- **Kos Sclavos**, Pharmacy Guild of Australia
- **Professor Ron Penny**, National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission
- **Kate Carnell**, Australian Food & Grocery Council
- **Dr Paul Gross**, Health Group Strategies
- **Robyn Williams**, Science journalist and broadcaster
- **Tom Booth**, VP International OTC/Consumer Health Care, Schering Plough
- **Diane Walsh**, Consumers Health Forum
- **Katherine Doric**, Nielsen
- **Fabian Dwyer**, IMS Health
- **Sheila Kelly**, Proprietary Association of Great Britain

Topics to be discussed include the evidence for Self Care and its global evolution, future directions in therapeutics regulation, and the development of a Self Care alliance in Australia.

The future of regulatory arrangements for the Australian pharmaceutical industry will be a major topic with contributions from Senator Jan McLucas, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, and Dr Rohan Hammett, from the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

A panel session will look at the building blocks for Self Care and will include Dr Hammett, Professor Ron Penny, Kos Sclavos, Kate Carnell and Diane Walsh, moderated by ABC science broadcaster, Robyn Williams.

Australian Self-Medication Industry Conference

Wednesday, 19 November 2008

Australian Technology Park, Redfern, Sydney

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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