

## Online asthma plan

ASTHMA Foundation NSW is the first partner to promote an online storage system for members to consolidate and centralise their personal health information.

Developed by an Australian company, miVitals is a free secure online storage system that brings together information from a person's pharmacist, GP, dentist and other specialists and health professionals.

Members can attach files such as reports and test images.

Asthma Foundation NSW ceo Greg Smith said the system will enable people to store, update and access their Asthma Action Plan incl current medications, "so they're available when needed, whether you have simply changed doctors, are travelling, or have experienced a potentially fatal asthma attack."

Members can also schedule reminders for medications, appointments or tests by email and SMS messages.

See [www.mivitals.com](http://www.mivitals.com).

## Today's PD wine fact - number 23!

WELCOME to our regular *Pharmacy Daily* wine feature.

Did you know that Wine Casks were first developed in 1967 by Australian Thomas Angove...?

Since its creation the Bag in a Box has become synonymous with the weekend barbeque.

Having had a rather poor quality image in the past, the humble bag-in-the-box is about to get a face lift with the release of the futuristic sq3 (superior quality 3 litres) from Beelgara - [www.sq3.com.au](http://www.sq3.com.au)

It was created to service the needs of consumers who want attractive packaging and bottle quality wine, but who like the functionality of casks and don't want the increased environmental impact that comes from glass packaging.

The superior quality to your average cask comes from its contents - the equivalent of 4 bottles of vintage varietals.

Four varieties feature in the range, retailing for \$24.95:

- sq3 2006 Cabernet Merlot
- sq3 2006 Semillon Sauvignon Blanc
- sq3 2006 Chardonnay
- sq3 2007 Rose

Data provided by Provisor

## Zolpidem not rescheduled

ZOLPIDEM has avoided rescheduling to S8, but will have a boxed warning on all packets.

The National Drugs and Poisons Schedule Committee (NDPSC) considered changing the status of zolpidem, best known in Australia as Stilnox, at its meeting this week because of concerns relating to reports of potential abuse of the sleeping pill.

The committee also considered submissions describing personal accounts of adverse events, but found there was no compelling evidence that the abuse potential of zolpidem required it to be rescheduled.

The NDPSC concluded the current S4 status remains appropriate, but noted the drug is only indicated for short-term use, it should not be used with alcohol, and it should be used with caution if taking other nervous system medications such as antidepressants.

The TGA said yesterday the

boxed warning was necessary because it was "important that healthcare professionals and the public are advised about side effects".

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia welcomed the decision.

PSA spokesman Aaron Hall said: "The TGA's action to apply a boxed warning on the Product Information for zolpidem will reinforce the message to all health-care providers to counsel consumers appropriately."

The TGA is continuing its evaluation of data on the safety of zolpidem and the NDPSC will keep a watching brief on the matter.

## Sigma deal done

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals this morning announced the completion of its purchase of Orphan Australia.

Orphan is a Melbourne-based specialty pharmaceutical company which focuses on licensing, marketing and distribution of novel, highly specialised therapeutics from international pharmaceutical and biotech companies for sale in Australia and New Zealand.

Sigma ceo Elmo de Alwis said the deal would lift Sigma's hospital presence and "complements our overall growth strategy by expanding our reach into niche pharmaceutical products with low commercial risk but high growth potential and strong margins."

## Bayer in patent suit

BAYER has announced it will vigorously defend itself against a Kogenate patent infringement lawsuit.

The company confirmed it has received a joint complaint filed by Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics Inc. and Novo Nordisk A/S in the US.

The plaintiffs allege that, through production and distribution of the recombinant factor VIII product KogenateR, Bayer infringes a compound patent issued in 2006.

Novartis and Novo Nordisk are claiming patent infringement and compensation.

Bayer said it is "of the opinion not to infringe on any valid patent claim of Novartis".

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## DISPENSARY CORNER

WOULD this help your patients quit smoking?

With official inflation figures at well over a staggering 100,000%, a single cigarette in Zimbabwe's capital Harare today would cost you A\$18, or \$2500,000.

On Tue one US dollar could buy you \$28 million; on Wed morning it \$29 million, and by afternoon it was \$210.5 million.

A CHINESE man has been fined for driving with an intravenous drip in his arm, saying he was sick of waiting for treatment in a clinic.

When police stopped a slow moving car in Laishan they were surprised to find an IV bottle hanging from the rear view mirror and connected to the driver's left arm.

"I thought as long I drove slowly there would be no danger," he said.

AND also in China, a 47-year-old woman is bouncing back after having 10 small springs removed from her body.

She had doctors baffled when presenting with back pain, with an x-ray showing white spots along her spine.

The chief surgeon said five springs were buried 1-1.5cm under the skin on her back.

"Some of them had grown together with the muscles, and rusted," he said.

Another five springs were removed from her waist, feet and the top of her head.

The woman says the springs may have been planted when her parents took her to a private clinic to treat epilepsy when she was nine years old.

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