

STOCK EXCHANGE

WELCOME to *Pharmacy Daily's* Stock Exchange column, where the industry is able to promote close to expiry or surplus items.

Today Norwest Amcal Pharmacy in Sydney is offering a range of point of sale and computer hardware, priced for a quick sale.

Items include two cash registers with laser barcode scanners, a shrink wrap machine, polaroid passport cameras, six OKI printers, a Sensormatic time lapse video recorder, three computers with flat screen monitors, and various broadband and computer network items.

The lot is available for \$2000 and Kiran Shah also has individual prices available via email at norwest.pharmacy@ninet.com.au.

If you have items you'd like to offer through *PD's* please email stockx@pharmacydaily.com.au.

RGH E-bulletin

THIS week's edition of the Repatriation General Hospital Pharmacy E-Bulletin provides background on Ornithine Transcarbamylase deficiency, which is a disorder relating to the urea cycle.

The bulletin can be obtained at no charge from Chris Alderman at chris.alderman@rgh.sa.gov.au.

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Sigma profit slumps 24%

SIGMA Pharmaceuticals this morning announced a \$77.2m net profit for the year to 31 Jan, confirming earlier forecasts.

However the company's shares surged 5% after ceo Elmo de Alwis outlined an improved second half performance for the firm.

He said the result reflected management's "commitment to addressing the key business issues that confronted Sigma."

De Alwis said competition in the generics market "remains fierce" but said the bottom line performance was particularly pleasing with new generic and OTC products continuing to roll out of the Arrow Group pipeline.

He said the Herron business also maintained market share and profitability after the appointment of a new management team.

Net sales in the Healthcare division were up 13.6% to \$2.35b, with improved profitability due to

the resolution of issues surrounding the Community Service Obligation pool.

Sigma said there were twenty new Arrow Group products scheduled for 2008/09, while Herron also planned six new launches this year as well as a review which would include new packaging and shelf repositioning.

The Chemists' Own Pharmacy Guild endorsement was recently extended for a further three yrs, and had sales growth of 24%.

On the retail side de Alwis said Sigma's Amcal and Guardian banners remain the biggest in the country, with the declining trend reversed in the second half.

Other initiatives included the Xndo weight loss program, an expansion of private label products, the new training initiative announced last week and the advent of "digital interactive health kiosks."

Heparin warning

A CONTAMINANT has been confirmed in a heparin product distributed in Australia by Astra Zeneca, with the Therapeutic Goods Administration issuing an urgent safety advisory to all public and private hospitals.

The TGA is in the process of testing all brands of intravenous heparin available here after the US FDA reported cases of anaphylaxis associated with the use of heparin.

It's unclear whether the Astra Zeneca contamination is related to a single batch or affects heparin products more generally.

While the testing continues the TGA is advising health workers to only use the drug where it is medically essential and to carefully monitor patients during and immediately following heparin administration for signs of allergy or anaphylactic reaction.

NZ pharmacy errors

A NZ pharmacy may have its licence suspended after a fourth dispensing error.

City Health Pharmacy in Palmerston North has been cleared in three previous Health and Disability Commission probes, but had conditions imposed in Aug 06 after the pharmacist gave a customer a high-dose anti-psychotic drug instead of cough medicine for their child.

Details of the latest medicine mix-up have not been revealed.

Vegan diet benefit

A gluten-free, vegan diet may protect arthritis sufferers against heart attacks and strokes, according to Swedish research

A new study has found this type of diet lowers levels of "bad" cholesterol, and raises the levels of natural antibodies to fight compounds implicated in arthritis.

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DISPENSARY CORNER

CRUCIFIXION can be bad for your health.

That's the gist of an official warning issued by the Philippines government last week in the lead up to Easter.

Worshippers in the devoutly Catholic country are renowned for their accurate re-enactments of the Easter story, with officials encouraging them to have tetanus injections and be sure to use a clean whip or nails.

"Getting deep cut wounds during whippings or lashings is inevitable and being so exposed during the course of the penitence, with all the heat and dust blowing in the wind, welcomes all sorts of infections and bacteria," a Health Department warning said.

Tourists watching the spectacle were also advised to bring their own sandwiches, "not only to save money but also to avoid getting diseases such as diarrhoea, hepatitis A and typhoid after eating food bought from street vendors."

SOCCER fans will be dying to put their name down for a new football-shaped cremation urn.

The black-and-white sphere, designed by Austrian funeral company Bestattung Wien, provides a permanent memory of the deceased's enthusiasm for the sport, and has been created because Austria will this year co-host the Euro 2008 football championships.



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