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Valeant eyes ISTA

VALEANT Pharmaceuticals has announced its latest proposal to acquire ISTA Pharmaceuticals for US\$6.50 per share.

In addition, ISTA has net debt of approximately US\$13 million, bringing the total enterprise value to approximately US\$327 million.

The offer is 67% over ISTA's closing price of US\$3.89 on the stock exchange last Friday.

Valeant has been courting ISTA since October this year and decided to make its latest proposal public after ISTA rejected it last week.

"We believe ISTA stockholders should not be denied the opportunity to determine for themselves whether their board and management should engage with Valeant in a meaningful and productive dialogue regarding our proposal," Valeant said.

Valeant has said that the offer will remain in effect until 31 January 2012.

Excor for kids hearts

AMERICAN children who have suffered heart failure, now have access to a new device that supports their weakened hearts and keeps them alive until a donor for a heart transplant can be found.

The Excor Pediatric System, made by a German company, Berlin Heart, has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration, and is a mechanical pulsatile cardiac assist device that consists of one or two external pneumatic blood pumps as well as multiple tubes to connect the blood pumps to heart chambers and the great arteries.

The device comes in graduated sizes to fit children from newborns to teens.

In Excor's primary U.S. study, which involved of 48 patients, its usage was found to improve survival to transplant in patients when compared with the use of extracorporeal membrane oxygenation which is the current standard of care (although not FDA approved).

According to the FDA, between 12-17% of children and 23% of infants die whilst on the waitlist for a heart transplant.

Price disclosure publication

DESCRIBED as the largest single price cut in the history of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, the determinations for Price Disclosure price reductions have been published by the Department of Health this month.

The price disclosure program progressively reduces the price of PBS medicines, and the newly published price reductions will apply to 75 products out of a total pool of 238 products subject to the price disclosure policy.

The size of the reductions range from between 82.7% to 10.5% with the average unweighted reduction being around 28.7%.

Responding to the price reductions, which will take effect from 01 April next year, the Generic Medicines Industry Association (GMiA), said "The impact of this reform will be extensive and will deliver substantial savings to government".

Better representation

THE US Food and Drug Administration is aiming to address the historic underrepresentation of women in clinical studies via a new draft guidance.

The guidance is intended for medical device developers and manufacturers, and outlines recommendations for designing and conducting device clinical studies that may enhance the enrollment of women, where appropriate.

"Certain medical products may elicit different responses in women than in men," the FDA said.

"This may be due in part to basic differences in men and women, including genetics, hormones, body size, diet, and sociocultural issues.

"In addition, certain variables associated with women, such as size or certain illnesses, may be responsible for certain differences between men and women in the safety and effectiveness of medical devices," the FDA added.

The guidance is now up for a 90 public input period, for details go to www.fda.gov.

"For the sake of patients and to secure a consistent chain of supply, we need to get these reforms bedded down first before embarking on any more policy change.

"Every time a consumer chooses a generic medicine instead of the original brand, there are substantial benefits to national savings.

"Supporting the uptake of generic medicines in Australia provides a three way win for the patient, the taxpayer and the economy," GMiA added.

For more details on medicines affected by the reductions, visit the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments website.

PD competition winner

CONGRATULATIONS to Caroline Bailey of Omega Pharma who was the lucky winner of last Friday's Innox competition.

For a chance to win a Gaia Mum-to-Be pack, see page two of today's issue.

Quitting is a gift

THE Pharmacy Guild of New Zealand is urging people to give themselves the gift of a smoke free 2012 by quitting smoking over the Christmas period.

"Giving up smoking would be a gift that goes on giving," said Guild President, Karen Crisp.

Speaking about the smoking process, the Guild reassured smokers that they won't have to do it alone, with a range of smoking cessation services on offer including consultation with a pharmacist who can create a programme to improve a smoker's chances of giving up.

"Many community pharmacies offer stop smoking services and can provide nicotine replacement therapy alongside advice and support for those wishing to quit," the Guild said.

"If you are a smoker, giving up the habit could be the one Christmas and New Year resolution that your family and friends would most thank you for," Crisp added.

More mental support

FROM 01 January 2012 \$19.3 million will be pumped into the *Support for Day to Day Living in the Community* (D2DL) program which assists Australians living with severe and persistent mental illness.

The program will provide day-to-day support for patients enabling them to stay connected to their community through arts and crafts workshops, cooking lessons, shopping trips and other social outings.

"Meaningful activity and social connection are critical to people's recovery from mental illness and Day to Day Living is proven to work, already helping thousands of people to begin their recovery journey," said the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing and Minister for Social Inclusion, Mark Butler.

FOBruary beating cancer

NEXT year Cabrini Health will launch a health campaign aimed at reducing bowel cancer death, titled FOBruary.

The initiative will urge all Australians over the age of 50 to have an annual FOB Test (Faecal Occult Blood Test) during the month of February to screen for bowel cancer (which is Australia's second biggest cancer killer after lung cancer).

To support the initiative, Cabrini is urging all pharmacists and their staff to encourage those over the age of 50 to have a FOB test.

"Many Australians are unaware the test is easy, non-invasive and can be done in the privacy of their own home," a statement from the company said.

"As the most commonly used health service provider pharmacists and pharmacy staff are ideally placed to take an active role in the delivery of preventative health in Australia," the company added.

For details visit the website-www.letsbeatbowelcancer.com.au.

Alternatively pharmacies interested in providing the BowelScreen Australia Program to their community should call 1800 55 65 75 or email bernadette.david@enterix.com.au.



Weekly Comment

Welcome to *Pharmacy Daily's* weekly comment feature.

This week's contributor is **Richard Moore** on behalf of **Nurofen**.



Investing in Staff

The benefit of in-store staff training within pharmacy is key to providing the right advice to customers.

It helps ensure advice is consistent and does not vary between the pharmacy team, significantly reducing the chance of customer confusion.

To continue to support pharmacists in teaching their pharmacy assistants to provide the best, evidenced-based advice, Reckitt Benckiser is preparing to launch a first of its kind Quality Use of Medicine Education Kit.

The kit will especially focus on helping pharmacists educate their pharmacy assistants on giving the correct advice when supplying OTC analgesics and matching customers' pain needs with the pain solutions available in pharmacy.

The training kit is designed to be delivered by the pharmacist as a small-group learning activity and throughout demonstrates how the Pharmacy Guild of Australia's Ask, Assess Advise protocol is used to implement Quality Use of Medicines in pharmacy.

With the implementation of this education training kit, Reckitt Benckiser hopes that pharmacy assistants will feel more confident when recommending pain management guidance in pharmacy.

More information about Reckitt Benckiser's education training kit will be provided to pharmacists soon.

New PBS listings for 2012?

THE Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee has released its recommendations relating to the listing of drugs on the PBS, which includes a positive recommendation for the listing of Anapen 500 (adrenaline IM injection 500 micrograms in 0.3ml single dose syringe auto-injector) on the PBS as an Authority Required listing for anticipated emergency treatment of acute allergic reactions with anaphylaxis, and also in patients where a 300 microgram adrenaline dose may not be sufficient because the patient has a mean body weight of 60kg or more or the patient has been assessed to be at high risk of severe anaphylaxis.

In addition, Fragmin (dalteparin sodium injection, single dose pre-filled syringe) has also been recommended for Restricted Benefit listing for two new strengths 10,000 and 12,500 units for use in haemodialysis; whilst Aspen Pharma's Tevagrastim injection (300 micrograms in 0.5 mL and 480 micrograms in 0.8 mL,

single use pre-filled syringe) has also been recommended for S100 listing (Highly Specialised Drugs Program) Authority Required listing.

Accu-Chek Aviva glucose indicator-blood test strips have also been recommended as an Unrestricted and Restricted Benefit (GP Management Plan).

Meanwhile the PBAC rejected Sanofi-Aventis' bid to have Adacel (pertussis vaccine-acellular combined with diphtheria and tetanus toxoids (adsorbed) 0.5ml) listed on the on the National Immunisation Program (NIP) as a single dose booster immunisation against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis to both parents of newborn infants (where there is no documented evidence of a dTpa booster having been given in the previous 10 years) citing "uncertain clinical effectiveness of the cocooning strategy and likely high and highly uncertain cost effectiveness" as its reasoning.

For a full list of the PBAC's decisions PBS recommendations see www.pbs.gov.au.

DISPENSARY CORNER

SAY goodbye to festive hangovers.

The ultimate hangover cure has been created by a former finance worker turned pharmaceutical mogul wannabe, Brenna Haysom.

According to Haysom, her newly launched Blowfish cure, which contains a mere 1000mgs of aspirin, 120mgs of caffeine and an antacid, was created after "one particularly brutal morning, which was the result of a particularly great night before".

"I started thinking there had to be a way to have both great nights and great days.

"I worked my way through every hangover remedy I could find... [and] I found a combination that did the trick, fast," she added.

The "miracle cure" has been granted US FDA approval and features the tag line "Own the Night. Save the Day".

LIZARDS love a smartphone.

An Australian pet bearded dragon named Crunch, has surprised his owner by beating him at the smartphone game, Ant Smasher.

Rather than take umbridge, Crunch's owner, Philip Gint, decided to post a clip of his lizard playing Ant Smasher on YouTube so his friends could see how skilled Crunch was.

The video shows Crunch using his tongue to lick the ants onscreen, and when the game finishes he looks to Gint to restart the game again.

The clip has become an overnight sensation, garnering worldwide publicity and resulting in offers from TV programs such as Good Morning America wanting to meet Crunch.

According to reptile experts Crunch's ability is not unusual as dragons are the only lizard that can respond to screen images, what is unusual is Crunch's willingness to play the game, as copycat attempts to get other dragon lizards to play Ant Smasher have failed.

WIN GAIA'S MUM-TO-BE PACK

Every day this week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving one lucky reader the chance to win **GAIA's** Mum-to-be Pack, valued at \$61.84.

GAIA's pure, natural, organic skincare is perfect for the mum-to-be – now featuring all natural pregnancy belly oil and belly butter alongside their adult skincare range – GAIA is now not just for babies. Their eco-friendly bamboo baby wipes also now come in a handy travel-size pack of 20s!

For special offers and deals on the entire range call Rebecca on: 0418 293 366 or email info@gaiaskinnaturals.com

Further info on the ranges are available at: www.gaiaskinnaturals.com or by calling 03 9703 1707.

To win your very own GAIA's Mum-to-be Pack, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the question below.



Why is GAIA Pure Pregnancy Belly Butter so good for itchy stretching skin and stretch marks?

Email your answer to: comp@pharmacydaily.com.au