

# Pharmacy DAILY

Thursday 23 Dec 2010

PHARMACYDAILY.COM.AU

## Strides to buy Ascent

**STRIDES** Arcolab Limited has entered into an agreement with Ascent Pharmaceuticals to purchase the outstanding minority shares in Ascent via a Scheme of Arrangement.

The new Strides Scheme will see shareholders receive \$0.40 in cash per share, valuing the total issued shares at \$100m.

The offer is a 14% increase on Strides previous proposal of \$0.35 per share, tendered on 16 March.

Ascent called a halt to trading yesterday telling authorities that it wanted the market to be able to trade on a "fully informed basis" when it recommenced on its requested date of 24 December.

The proposed acquisition is now subject to shareholder approval (at shareholder meeting in April 2011), as well as ASIC and Court approval.

**MEANWHILE** Ascent has also said it expects to report full-year gross earnings between \$17.5- \$18m.

## Scheduling to stay the same

**THE** Pharmacy Guild of Australia has welcomed the decision by the Department of Health and Ageing's National Coordinating Committee on Therapeutic Goods (NCCTG), to retain the current medication scheduling system, saying it is an "early Christmas present for community pharmacy".

As a result of the decision, both the Pharmacy Medicines (S2) and the Pharmacist Only Medicines (S3) schedules will remain in force and in their present incarnation.

According to Guild National President, Kos Sclavos, maintaining the schedule status quo "will provide increased certainty and stability for the profession".

In making its decision, the NCCTG took into account the many changes to the community pharmacy landscape (including the creation of the Pharmacy Board of Australia) which had occurred since the publication of the Galbally Review of Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Legislation in 2001.

Based on these changes, the NCCTG found that at this time it was appropriate to maintain S2

and S3.

**MEANWHILE** responding to the Guild's submission on the need to retain the current mystery shopper program, which supports both the OTC schedules, the NCCTG concluded that the scheme's data was 'valuable' and that the program should be maintained.

The NCCTG did however recommend that additional training with regard to S2 medicines for pharmacy assistants be put in place by 2014.

This recommendation was based on an examination of the pharmacy performance data generated through the mystery shopping scheme between 2002 and 2010.

"It is important, for pharmacists and pharmacy staff to remain vigilant with regard to our OTC schedules and committed to the necessary training to ensure pharmacies are providing these medicines to the community in an appropriate way," said Sclavos.

"If regulators cannot see the benefits for the community in our current scheduling arrangements, they could be threatened again at some point in the future," he added.

## National Competency

**OVER** the coming weeks pharmacists nationwide will receive a 2010 version of the National Competency Standards Framework for Pharmacists in Australia.

Updated from the 2003 version, the Standards include a series of new features such as the consolidation of the 'Functional Areas' and 33 Standards to represent the total competency framework for the profession; strengthening of the standards; highlighting the expectations for initial registration with shading throughout all eight Domains; and introducing the concept of advanced practice to the profession.

In response to the release, the Australian Pharmacy Liaison Forum is encouraging pharmacists "to take a few minutes to read the introduction to the document and especially how the framework applies to their own professional practice".

"Pharmacists may see some initial inconsistency depending on whether the 2003 or 2010 version was used at the time the program was developed," a statement from the APLF said.

"You should simply note the relevant version that has been used in your CPD records.

"This inconsistency will gradually disappear over 2011, as the updated 2010 standards are used as the basis for all activities across the whole profession," the statement added.

## DISPENSARY CORNER

**JUST** a touch of indigestion?

A Kenyan inmate has undergone surgery to remove a mobile phone from his intestine.

The phone, wrapped in a plastic bag was uncovered when the man set off a metal detector.

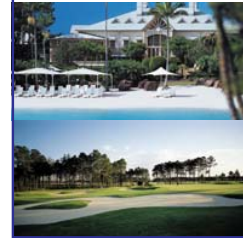
According to reports the device had been stuck in the prisoners intestine for a month.

**PENSIONER** with iron will.

An 88-year old Aussie has graduated from Melbourne University with a Doctorate of Philosophy after undergoing two surgeries, major illness and the passing of his beloved wife.

"I haven't a first-class brain but I have a first-class will and I worked hard," he told reporters.

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**Congratulations** to yesterday's lucky winner, **Deepak Chhiboo** from **APHS Pharmacy Greenslopes Hospital, QLD**.