

**media release**

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## **CSO WHOLESALERS UNITE TO BRING GLOBAL STANDARDS TO AUSTRALIA'S MEDICINE SUPPLY CHAIN**

Australia's CSO wholesalers – Symbion, Sigma, API and National Pharmacies – have set aside their competitive differences to implement a common, central source for all medicine supply chain product information under the framework of global GS1 Standards.

In the first stage of the project, information about all the products offered by the CSO (Community Service Obligation) wholesalers will be brought into a single secure GS1net database managed by GS1 Australia to help create a smarter, safer and more secure supply chain.

The initiative – driven by the National Pharmaceutical Services Association (NPSA), which represents the CSO wholesalers – will deliver a wide range of benefits including:

- Enhanced supply chain security: Through use of unique Global Trade Item Number (GTIN) identification encoded in GS1 Barcodes, product identification will be more robust and traceable than ever before, safeguarding against counterfeiting, assisting with management of medicine shortfalls and enhancing the ability for recalls (through GS1 Recallnet).
- Accessible data: By ensuring consistent product data and unambiguous identification of products, the NPSA initiatives will provide a single quality-controlled, paperless, data-rich environment for utilisation by pharmacists and the consumer.
- Patient-oriented: Scanning at the point of dispense not only reduces errors but will enable pharmacists to record full product details – potentially including brand, batch, expiry etc. – giving the ability to load information into the patient record and assist in medication management.

NPSA President **Patrick Davies** said the move to global GS1 Standards would bring the pharmacy industry into line with international trends and advances in Australia's hospital supply chain system.

“As wholesalers, we are committed to creating a smarter, safer and more secure supply chain system for medicines in Australia, continually investing in new technologies and initiatives to further underpin the commitment we all make as signatories to the Community Service Obligation,” Mr Davies said.

“The challenge has been that we have all been working independently on the various elements that make up the supply chain – from the identification and tracking of products through to electronic messaging and information aimed at the consumer.

“The data is all there, but now this NPSA program brings it all together under the framework of the global GS1 Standards to create a really powerful tool.

“We believe this commitment strengthens the promise we make under the CSO and creates a roadmap for the future of the medicine supply chain in Australia.”

GS1 Australia Chief Executive Officer **Maria Palazzolo** said the potential of the move was “almost limitless”.

“Moving to GS1 Standards will not only have enormous benefits in terms of efficiencies and security for the industry, but it will also translate into some real opportunities for pharmacy to further improve patient care,” Ms Palazzolo said.

“Because all the data is linked to the GTIN in the product’s barcode, patients are already able to use their smart phones to scan the product and access web resources containing important information.

“This could extend to a near future where pharmacists will be able to offer significantly improved medicine management in the home, remote management, more intelligent information around complementary medicines – the opportunities are really exciting.”

***NPSA** is the peak organisation representing pharmaceutical wholesalers in Australia. NPSA members guarantee timely access to PBS medicines for all Australians, regardless of where they live, under the Community Service Obligation (CSO) arrangements as part of the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement. For more information, please visit [www.npsa.org.au](http://www.npsa.org.au).*

***GS1 Australia** is the Australian member of GS1, a not-for-profit, global organisation that develops and maintains the most widely-used supply chain standards in the world and a leader in facilitating efficient international business. GS1 Australia currently serves 22 industry sectors and supports 17,000 members nationally to improve supply chain efficiency and cost effectiveness by adopting best practice GS1 global standards. For more information visit [www.gs1au.org](http://www.gs1au.org)*

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