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HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY WORKS TOGETHER TO IMPROVE PATIENT SAFETY

Leading global companies from the pharmaceutical and medical device industry have formed a global GS1 Healthcare User Group (HUG). Its objective is to lead the utilisation and development of global standards for the healthcare industry, with the primary focus on automatic product identification to improve patient safety.



Baxter, Boston Scientific, B.Braun, 3M, GSK, Hospira, Johnson & Johnson, Medtronic, Merck, NACDS, Pfizer, Smiths Medical and Tyco have participated in the kick-off-meeting, which took place on 23 May 2005 in Princeton, New Jersey and have committed to participate actively in the group. It is the first time that the healthcare industry is aligning around a global solution to enhance automatic product identification for the benefit of patients worldwide. The work of the HUG will improve the performance of the healthcare supply chain for drugs and medical devices through the collaborative development and endorsement of recommended voluntary GS1 standards and best practices.

The main focus areas for the group are the following:

- Prevention of Medical errors
- Product Authentication
- Tracking and Tracing
- Increase total Supply Chain efficiency

More follows...

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While evaluating existing standards, the HUG will work on the further development of GS1 standards to optimise their utilisation in healthcare applications. The work teams will be lead by participants from the industry who have developed a working plan for the coming 12 months.

In addition, the group will also focus on e-commerce transactions, data synchronisation and development of long-term strategies for future healthcare trends, as well as providing guidance on healthcare standards for all participants of the healthcare supply chain and related regulatory bodies.

The HUG is a voluntary and open group and welcomes all GS1 members from the healthcare industry. Since the first meeting an additional 11 companies, including some from the Asia-Pacific region, have already indicated their interest to join the group.

Miguel Angel Lopera, Chief Executive Officer of GS1, said in welcoming the new initiative in the healthcare industry: "I'm delighted that GS1 standards will be used to improve the safety of patients worldwide while simultaneously increasing the transparency and efficiency in the healthcare supply chain. GS1 standards are already used in many countries worldwide and for many different products and services in the healthcare sector, but with the industry leadership of the User Group we will see wide implementation and improvement globally."

-ENDS-

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Notes to editors

GS1 - THE GLOBAL LANGUAGE OF BUSINESS

GS1 is a global organisation dedicated to the design and implementation of global standards, technologies and solutions to improve the efficiency and visibility in supply and demand chains.

GS1 has more than 30 years experience in the development and support of global supply chain standards and technologies. GS1 is a neutral, not-for-profit standards (and related services) organisation.

GS1 offers a diversified portfolio of products, solutions and services, including the GS1 System of standards, the most widely used supply chain standards system in the world. GS1's portfolio ranges from GS1 BarCodes to GS1 eCom (electronic commerce tools) to next generation technologies and solutions such as GS1 GDSN (Data Synchronization), EPCglobal (using RFID technologies) and traceability.

The organisation operates in more than 20 industries and sectors ranging from Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) to Health Care, Transport & Logistics, and Defence. GS1 and its Member Organisations play a leading role in supply and demand chain management improvement worldwide for large, small and medium-sized organisations.

Formed in 2004 from the joining together of EAN International & the Uniform Code Council, Inc (UCC), GS1 is truly global, with a presence in 101 countries driven by more than a million companies, who execute more than five billion transactions a day.



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