

MEDIA RELEASE

14 March 2007

CASE AND PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF SINGAPORE CONDUCT PRICE SURVEY OF MEDICINES FOR WORLD CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY

**Focus on pricing of medication used for Diabetes, High Blood Cholesterol and High
Blood Pressure obtained from 3 retail chain pharmacies: Guardian, Unity and Watsons**

The theme of this year's **World Consumer Rights Day (March 15)** is on pharmaceutical marketing and drug promotion. From December 2006 to end January 2007, CASE and the Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore (PSS) conducted a price survey of more than 300 medications used for the treatment of Diabetes, High Blood Cholesterol and High Blood Pressure. Prices are obtained from three major retail chain pharmacies, Guardian, Unity and Watsons. (Please refer to Appendix A)

Key Points:

1. Generic drugs are less expensive compared to their proprietary or "branded" versions. For drugs that are shown as "NA", it means that the pharmacies do not keep these drugs, as there was no demand. These drugs are still available in Singapore. However, pharmacies would be able to provide the drugs if there is a request. Prices are effective as of end Jan 2007. Consumers can access the price list at the CASE website: www.case.org.sg
2. The prices provided give an indicative market price. Hence, consumers would have a good idea of the cost of medicine and the different options available.
 - a) Consumers can discuss with their doctors or pharmacists about obtaining generic drugs as compared to proprietary or "branded" drugs if they feel reducing medicine cost is a priority. This is especially relevant for patients suffering from chronic diseases requiring long term medication. Though generic drugs are generally as safe and effective as proprietary drugs, they should consult medical professionals as individuals react to drugs

differently, so even a minute difference in ingredients used might make a difference.

- b) Consumers should request for itemised billing so that costs of medication are clear and transparent.

CASE and PSS will be working together to educate patients and the general public on better management of chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol. Articles contributed by member of PSS will be made available on the CASE and PSS website.

On 31st March 2007, Consumers can learn more about the survey results in our upcoming public forum, titled “Know your Medicine, Understand your Options.” Admission is free. Consumers can call 6461 1859 or 6461 1843, or email forum@case.org.sg.

For more details on the forum, please log on to www.case.org.sg

This year on Sunday March 18, CASE will be holding a nationwide event “Walk with CASE” to commemorate the World Consumer Rights Day. Mr Lee Yi Shyan, Minister of State for Trade & Industry, will be the Guest of Honour of this event. Participants will walk a 2.2km route around the Singapore River in a show of solidarity and support for consumer rights. In recognition of their contributions to the CASE consumer movement, we will also be taking the opportunity to award our long time volunteers with our Volunteer Awards.

For media queries, please contact:

Mr Seah Seng Choon
Executive Director
seahsc@case.org.sg
6461 1813 / 9821 6151

Ms Zhao Li
Corporate Communications Department
zhaoli@case.org.sg
6461 1814 / 9049 6206

Consumers Association of Singapore:

The Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE) is an independent, non-profit organisation that is committed towards protecting consumers’ interest through information and education, and promoting an environment of fair and ethical trade practices. One of its key achievements is in lobbying for Consumer Protection (Fair Trading) Act (CPFTA) which came into effect on March 1, 2004.