

treatment of asthma, was shown to be as effective in the treatment of moderate to severe COPD in two recent pivotal efficacy and safety trials: SHINE and SUN. The SHINE trial demonstrated a significant positive difference between Symbicort and formoterol or budesonide in forced expiratory volume in 1 second (FEV₁) over a 6-month period, while the results of SUN indicated a significant positive difference between Symbicort and formoterol or placebo in FEV₁ over a 12-month period. Both trials also showed a safety profile consistent with the established use of Symbicort in patients with asthma. More than 12 million Americans currently suffer from COPD, and it is the fourth leading cause of death in the United States.

FDA kicks off major hiring initiative

As part of an effort to address FDA's critical hiring needs, the agency is looking to fill more than 600 new positions and backfill more than 700 others in fiscal year 2008. These new employees, who would represent a threefold increase

in FDA's hires from the past 3 years, are needed to help fulfill the FDA Amendments

Act of 2007, the Food Protection Plan, and the Import Safety Action Plan. The agency has been granted "direct-hire authority" by the federal Office of Personnel Management because of the critical need for a variety of positions, including

pharmacists, pharmacologists, medical officers, consumer safety officers, chemists, nurse consultants, biologists, microbiologists, health/regulatory/general health scientists, mathematical statisticians, epidemiologists, and veterinary medical officers in the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, the Center for Devices and Radiological Health, the Center for Food Safety and Nutrition, the Center for Veterinary Medicine, the National Center for Toxicological Research, the Office of the Commissioner, and the Office of Regulatory Affairs, according to an FDA news release. Direct-hire authority allows the agency to expedite the hiring process, so that new employees can be on the job in as few as 3 weeks.

New labeling for nonoxynol 9 OTC contraceptives out in June

Last December, FDA issued a ruling requiring a new warning on nonoxynol 9 (N9) OTC vaginal contraceptive and spermicidal products; this month marks the deadline for manufacturers to incorporate the updated warning. The new labeling is intended to caution patients that N9 "does not protect against HIV/AIDS or other STDs and may increase the risk of getting HIV from an infected partner," according to FDA's final ruling. N9 can increase the risk of HIV infection by causing irritation of the vagina and rectum. In a news release at the time of the ruling, Janet Woodcock, MD, Director of the Center for Drug Evaluation and

Research, commented that the rule was designed to "correct misconceptions that the chemical N9 in these widely available stand-alone contraceptive products protects against sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection." N9 is found in stand-alone spermicides in the form of gels, foams, films, or inserts.

Pennsylvania students take steps to fight diabetes

Through the Peds for Prevention program, 2,700 students and staff members at five Haverford Township, Pa., elementary schools took up walking this April as a preventive strategy for diabetes. Focus Pharmacy, an online pharmacy provider based in southeastern Pennsylvania, cosponsored the program with the



Haverford Township School District Education Foundation and donated a total of \$25,000 in grant monies, pedometers, and educational materials. The area students measured every step they took during April to promote better exercise habits.

At the end of the month, an award ceremony was held at Haverford Middle School as all students took their last 500 steps together. In a news release, Focus pointed out that more than 775,000 area residents with diabetes. "The Peds for Prevention program ... will hopefully serve as a catalyst for national improvements in the quality of health education for young children," said Joel Shpigel, BPharm, CEO and cofounder of Focus Pharmacy. The program also included diabetes prevention education, as cafeteria staff and Focus employees joined to recommend exercise programs, healthy food choices, and health tips to students. Postsurvey participants reported a 2.8% overall decrease in playing video games and a 2.8% overall increase in walking with pedometers, riding bicycles, and playing outside with friends.

FEDERAL PHARMACY



CAPT Stephanie M. Simon, MSC, USN, will relieve CAPT David E. Price, MSC, USN, as Pharmacy Consultant to the Navy Surgeon General. Also referred to as the Specialty Leader, this officer advises the Navy Surgeon General on pharmacy-related matters such as policy issues and personnel. On Price's retirement Simon will become the 20th Pharmacy Consultant, and the second woman in the position. She will represent the 554 active duty, civil service, and contract pharmacists as well as 975 pharmacy technicians working in Navy medicine.