



## SUMMIT PLANNING

### 5th Annual Armada Specialty Pharmacy Summit to be held March 10-13, 2009

Armada's Annual Specialty Pharmacy Business Summit is now recognized as the leading national venue for advancing the interests of Specialty Pharmacy. With more than 500 attendees in 2008 – and more expected in 2009 – lots of activity is already underway to assure that our next event will once again exceed the expectations of every attendee. Confirmed Summit dates are March 10-13, 2009 - once again at the fabulous Wynn Hotel in Las Vegas!

#### So, how do we top last year's event?

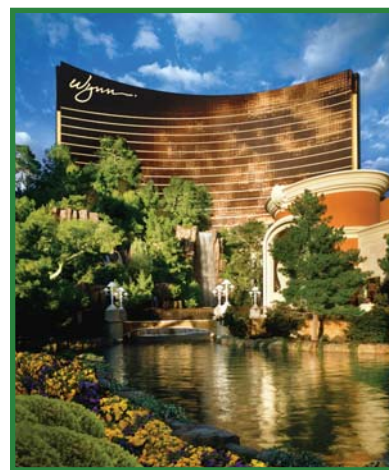
Armada isn't interested in simply putting on a routine manufacturer exhibit hall or redundant meeting rooms with some new glitz. Frankly, anyone can do that in Las Vegas. Each year we seek to set the bar ever higher. The summit provides each participant with an important business forum and continues to deliver more value as the genesis of a national society for specialty pharmacy begins to shape this event.

Specialty pharmacies have benefitted from the expanded and diverse presentations that cover a host of business issues pertinent to helping them grow and directly improve their bottom lines.

Manufacturers continue to comment that the Armada Specialty Pharmacy Summit is one of the few business to business venues that demonstrates a measurable benefit from their attendance and sponsorship. Dozens of side-meetings and networking sessions between specialty pharmacies, manufacturers and distributors allow for both 'getting to know you time' as well as 'crafting solutions that help each other expand the reach of these high touch, high cost specialty products.'

#### Armada – Making a Market

Armada knows that you need to define a market before you can make a market. The earlier Armada Summits have successfully accomplished the publishing a national definition for specialty pharmacy. This upcoming Armada Summit will continue the specialty pharmacy awareness theme and include multiple opportunities for building relationships amongst the attendees and vendors. We know that the healthcare service market is truly a relationship driven business. The relationships we have worked hard to forge over the past thirty years have been critical to the success of this project. Our exceptional ability to organize this market and provide



*The 5th Annual Armada Specialty Pharmacy Summit will be held March 10-13 at the Wynn Hotel in Las Vegas*

a professional setting for introducing the new buyers to established sellers is once again proving to be a winning market making model. While all of this is going on, Armada continues to deliver new programs and agreements that provide not merely discounts for specialty pharmacy members, but more importantly, sustainable business relationships with key manufacturers and payors. Your participation at our March, 2009 event promises to provide these types of opportunities and more!

#### Walking the Talk –

At the March 2008 Summit we talked at length about this being the time for those of us in this industry to be more pro-active, and not just with our direct stakeholders. Many external influences were – and continue to be – potential threats to the security and health of our still growing industry, a lack of organization leaving us overly exposed.

We would like to think that our grass roots lobbying with Congress earlier this year may have helped to sway opinion in Washington related to pending AMP legislation. Other important issues, such as pharmacy prompt payment and equitable marketing practices, were also needed to help create a level playing field. The passage of the new Medicare bill this month included relief for these as well as other key items. Armada plans on ramping up these efforts in 2009. Look for more details!

## CHRONIC DISEASE FORUM – MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS (MS)

**MS** is a chronic and unpredictable disease of the central nervous system that most researchers feel is an autoimmune disorder. There are more than 400,000 patients in this country with an estimate of more than 10,000 new cases each year (the CDC does not mandate reporting of new MS cases so the numbers are based on industry data.) Because early symptoms are vague and can easily be confused with other autoimmune conditions, most MS patients don't start therapy till some damage is already done. Fortunately, a number of "disease modifying" therapies effectively manage the progress of the disease. These injectable therapies have been on the market for many years and include several well established brands. In fact, these four products (Avonex, Betaseron, Copaxone and Rebif) are among the top 12 specialty pharmacy products sold each year according to published reports. On average, a course of therapy for these products will cost in excess of \$20,000 annually.

Specialty pharmacies have been servicing the needs of MS patients for many years. These pharmacies have the expertise to help these patients deal with both therapy side-effects as well as the debilitating effects of the disease. MS can cause loss of coordination, blurred vision, slurred speech, numbness, extreme fatigue, and in most severe cases, paralysis. For some patients these symptoms come and go – referred to as 'relapsing and remitting' MS. At any stage of the disease, however, patients struggle to remain ambulatory and productive. Specialty pharmacies understand these challenges and develop care plans to achieve optimal therapy outcomes that often include exercise, proper nutrition, stress management, and so on.



### What's on the horizon?

We actually traversed the horizon a year or more ago with the introduction of a new therapy for MS (Tysabri) which also happens to be the first product administered through venous infusion (vs. sub-Q.) And, if one looks into the FDA pipeline, one will find that the MS toolkit may soon be crowded with many new, competing therapies. In fact, MS boasts one of the busiest pipelines with 15 new injectable or infused therapies and 9 new

oral hopefuls. And, because of their high development costs, these biologics typically end up being very expensive.

### Any Prospects for a Cure?

MS symptoms result when an immune-system attack affects myelin, the protective insulation surrounding nerve fibers of the central

nervous system (the brain and spinal cord). Myelin is destroyed and replaced by scars of hardened "sclerotic" tissue. Some underlying nerve fibers are permanently severed. The damage appears in multiple places within the central nervous system. All these factors make MS a tough disease to tackle and the prospects for a cure in the near term are not strong. This makes MS a key disease target for specialty pharmacies, especially as the patient base continues to grow and the number of products that will need to be managed will grow quickly before the end of this decade.

### *Editorial Support provided by:*

William Sullivan, Specialty Pharmacy Solutions LLC.

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## Spotlight on Armada Members

### Commcare Pharmacy, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Commcare Pharmacy is another great example of American enterprise typified by the hard work and entrepreneurial vision of Sal and Nicholas Saraniti. This father & son team took a calculated risk more than 10 years ago and opened a pharmacy dedicated to a large unmet need in southern FL, HIV/AIDS.

That bet has clearly paid off. Today, Commcare has grown to be one of the largest providers of HIV/AIDS therapy in the US with thousands of patients not only in FL but across the country.

It is said that healthcare is local and in HIV/AIDS that may be especially true. As a result, Commcare today operates out of three locations in FL, in Ft. Lauderdale, Miami and West Palm Beach. What has distinguished this pharmacy from other larger national competitors is the level of patient care and commitment that is now their hallmark. Sal Saraniti, RPh recognized that HIV/AIDS customers in this region needed a reliable source for specialty pharmacy. "The stories we heard from patients were heartbreaking and we felt a need to provide quality services in a caring and comfortable environment. That it turned out to be a good business decision was an added blessing," says Sal.

"We recognized a few years back that the market for specialty pharmacy was also expanding," says Nicholas Saraniti who heads up operations, sales and marketing for the company. Nicholas added, "Our business and clinical model were well established and these core competencies were easily transferable to other therapeutic categories. Today we are very strong in RA, MS, and HepC to name a few. In 2006 we saw the Oral Oncology market take off and we successfully built a position in that high growth segment. Clearly our reputation in the southeast region – especially within the prescriber community and with manufacturers – was a real asset."

With a staff of more than 35 employees Commcare now ranks as one of the top 50 specialty pharmacies nationally. Commcare actively markets its services throughout the southeast region.

#### Focus on the Bottom Line

Nicholas Saraniti knows what it takes to succeed in the specialty pharmacy business, Net Margin. With cuts to Medicaid reimbursement for HIV/AIDS and the increase in the cost of doing business, bottom line margin is always on the front burner. "Purchasing is critical to eking out additional margin," says Sal Saraniti, "and we spend a lot of time seeking out every opportunity to enable us to be more competitive." Nicholas adds "We look to Armada to be our partner in helping us attain that 'extra edge' – to help us reach our profitability goals. The fact that they are so well aligned with us in the specialty pharmacy segment adds to that relationship."



*Commcare Pharmacy is owned and operated by Sal (Right) & Nicholas Saraniti (Left)*



For more information contact Nicholas Saraniti at (954) 568-6212 or visit [www.commcarepharmacy.com](http://www.commcarepharmacy.com)

**ARMADA**  
*Health Care*

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

### **Kuvan™** (sapropterin dihydrochloride) BioMarin

FDA Orphan Drug approval has been granted for Kuvan™ for the treatment of PKU. This ORAL form of therapy utilizes a naturally occurring enzyme cofactor to reduce blood phenylalanine (Phe) levels in patients with hyperphenylalaninemia. BioMarin estimates that Kuvan could be a potential treatment option for ~30 to 50 % of the 50,000+ PKU patients in the developed world. PAH is required for the metabolism of phenylalanine, an essential amino acid found in most protein-containing foods. If the active enzyme is not present in sufficient quantities, Phe accumulates to abnormally high levels in the blood and becomes toxic to the brain.

### **TREANDA®** (bendamustine hydrochloride) Cephalon

The FDA has approved TREANDA® for Injection for the first line treatment of patients with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL), a slowly progressing blood and bone marrow disease. The American Cancer Society estimates that more than 15,000 new cases of this rare disease will be diagnosed in the United States this year. FDA also granted the agent an Orphan Drug designation. Trial data suggests that TREANDA delivers cell death via several pathways; by damage to the DNA in cancer cells, resulting in apoptosis (pro-

grammed cell death) as well as by a non-apoptotic pathway known as mitotic catastrophe (a disruption of normal cell division).

### **Cinryze™** (C1 inhibitor) LEV

An FDA review committee has unanimously recommended the approval of Cinryze™ (C1 inhibitor) for the prophylactic treatment of hereditary angioedema (HAE), also known as C1 inhibitor deficiency. Cinryze™ would be the first therapy for patients with HAE in the U.S. HAE is characterized by extremely painful, debilitating and sometimes fatal swelling of the extremities, face, genitals, abdomen and laryngeal tract. These attacks, which affect an estimated 10,000 people in the U.S., are usually spontaneous or precipitated by emotional or physical stress. HAE is the result of a gene defect. While there is no other approved therapy for acute HAE in the U.S., C1 inhibitor has been used in Europe to treat HAE for more than 35 years. There are estimated to be 10,000 people with HAE in the U.S.

### **Cimzia®** (certolizumab pegol) Enzon Pharmaceuticals

The FDA has approved an expanded indication for Cimzia®, the first and only subcutaneous administered PEGylated anti-TNFα antibody for reducing signs and symptoms of Crohn's disease and maintaining clinical response in adult patients with moderate to severe active disease who have an inadequate response to conventional therapy.

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**ARMADA**  
*Health Care*  
51 JFK Parkway  
Short Hills, NJ 07078