

# MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## **Pharmacy researchers secure lucrative funding script**

The University of Tasmania has dominated the latest round of Australian Government funding in the field of pharmaceutical research with four projects securing almost \$730,000.

The windfall has been awarded by the Department of Health and Ageing as part of the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement Research and Development Program managed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia.

The successful projects are within the School of Pharmacy's clinical research group, Unit for Medication Outcomes, Research and Education (UMORE), led by Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's 2007 Pharmacist of the Year, Professor Gregory Peterson.

Prof Peterson said the funding allocation recognised UMORE as a vibrant and expanding research group which has already received research income of more than \$5 million in the past five years.

"The outstanding success in this funding round is recognition of the quality of the research conducted within UMORE and further evidence of the unit's status as a national leader in clinical pharmaceutical research," Prof Peterson said.

### **The School of Pharmacy lead projects are:**

*Community pharmacy promoting appropriate sedative use in aged care: The ReDUSE project*

Professor Gregory Peterson will lead a project to reduce the use of benzodiazepines (sleeping tablets) and antipsychotics in nursing homes. These medications can increase the risk of falls and consequently reduced quality of life. The School has

already assessed that Tasmanian nursing home residents are prescribed these medications at a higher rate than any other state in Australia.

*Pharmacy-based model enabling patient self-monitoring of Warfarin: development and evaluation*

Chief investigator, Dr Luke Bereznicki, will develop a program involving Australian pharmacists to identify candidates for Patient Self Monitoring of the drug Warfarin and provide ongoing education and support. Warfarin is the world's number one drug for major adverse events, accounting for 10 per cent of all drug-related hospital admissions.

*Pharmacy dispensing records to identify and educate patients with suboptimal asthma management*

Senior researcher Dr Shane Jackson will utilize community pharmacies and their computerised prescription data records of asthmatics to review their medication management. This software program could potentially be adapted for Australia's network of pharmacists to improve management of other chronic diseases.

*The Economic Value of Home Medicines Review*

A team of researchers led by chief investigator Mr Peter Tenni will review the optimal use of prescribed medication and management while assessing typical drug groups, problems and resolutions. The project will also focus on health care costs, decreases in specialist and GP costs, worsening of underlying diseases and hospital days avoided.

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