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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Baxa Praises NPSA Patient Safety Alert Advising Hospitals to Switch to Safer Oral/Enteral Syringes

The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) has released a Patient Safety Alert detailing the hazards of wrong-route administration and recommending immediate actions to ensure that oral/enteral medications cannot be administered through an intravenous connection.

Bracknell, UK: April 17th 2007 – “The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) issued an important Alert on 28th March 2007, identifying the need for hospitals to ensure adequate measures are put in place to minimise errors in the administration of liquid medication,” says Terry Aston, Managing Director of Baxa Ltd. He continues, “Baxa praises the move by the NPSA as a significant step in eliminating patient safety incidents involving intravenous administration of oral liquid medications.” Hospitals can comply with the Patient Safety Alert immediately using the Exacta-Med[®] Oral/Enteral Dispensers from Baxa Ltd.

According to the Alert, inadvertent IV administration of oral medications resulted in numerous patient safety incidents and three reported deaths (2001 to 2004). The NPSA further proposes actions to minimise the risk of wrong-route errors – advocating the use of oral/enteral syringes for administering oral liquids that feature clear differentiation from those used for intravenous medication.

The Alert requires the use of oral/enteral syringes in all clinical areas by 30 September 2007, recommending the use of coloured oral/enteral syringes with clear labelling to help with differentiation. In addition, the syringe tips must be incompatible with any intravenous or other parenteral devices. The NPSA’s action points further indicate the removal of luer connections in tubeset ports, eliminating any potential confusion between central lines and feeding lines. In addition, the Alert suggests that procedures, training and risk assessments be carried out to ensure all staff are aware of the potential

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for inadvertent error in administering liquid medication and are familiar with the procedures and products required to minimise risk. All UK hospitals are expected to fully comply with the NPSA guidelines by 31 March 2008, although actions to examine current practices and begin implementation of safer practices are expected by July 2007.

The Baxa Oral/Enteral Dispensers are syringe-like devices specifically designed for safe administration of oral and enteral liquids, as they cannot be used as intravenous syringes. These dispensers are clearly labelled and highly differentiated, featuring a purple plunger – the colour most likely to become the European industry standard for enteral catheters and administration devices. Exacta-Med Dispensers also have a clear barrel for additional safety. Products with coloured or opaque barrels make it harder for nurses to detect air bubbles, may obscure particles within the liquid and can make accurate measurement more difficult.

The cost of changing to oral/enteral syringes is documented within the NPSA's Alert. Oral/enteral syringes tend to cost more than intravenous syringes, yet the report acknowledges that they can be washed and re-used for single patient use and to do so would provide significant economies. Terry Aston, Managing Director of Baxa Ltd, comments: "Baxa Oral/Enteral Dispensers are validated for re-use up to 30 times on the same patient, so on a cost-per-use basis; this already makes them cost-effective as well as bringing additional benefits of safety."

Since 1975, Baxa Corporation's focus has been to provide technology for health-system pharmacies that improves patient safety, reduces the risk of medication errors and facilitates compliance to regulatory requirements. Latex-free Baxa Oral/Enteral Dispensers fit the needs of pharmacy, nursing and outpatient caregivers for safe medication administration. The wider tip design of the Exacta-Med Dispensers was developed in cooperation with representatives and customers from premier children's hospitals worldwide.

Useful links: <http://www.baxa.com> – background for Baxa Corporation



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<http://www.npsa.nhs.uk> – latest news and information on NPSA

<http://www.npsa.nhs.uk/display?contentId=5807> – details of the NPSA Alert
and guidelines

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About Baxa Corporation

Baxa, a customer-focused medical device company, provides innovative, solution-based technologies for fluid handling and delivery. Its systems and devices promote the safe and efficient preparation, handling, packaging, and administration of fluid medications. Key products include Rapid-Fill[®] Automated Syringe Fillers, Exacta-Med[®] Oral Dispensers, MicroFuse[®] Syringe Infusers, Repeater[®] Pharmacy Pumps, and Exacta-Mix[®] and MicroMacro[®] Multi-Source Compounders; used worldwide in hospitals and healthcare facilities.

Privately held, Baxa Corporation has subsidiaries and sales offices in Canada and the United Kingdom; direct representation in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg and The Netherlands; and distribution partners worldwide. Further information is available at www.baxa.com.

Baxa Ltd was recently nominated for the Award for Innovation in the Thames Valley Business Awards for the Exacta-Mix 2400 Compounder which automates the mixing of multiple fluid ingredients for Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN).

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