

## F.D.A. Approves Asthma Treatment

AstraZeneca has won approval from the Food and Drug Administration for its asthma drug Symbicort, but the company said Saturday that it would not sell it in the United States until mid-2007.

The approval could be a blow for the rival drug maker GlaxoSmithKline, which makes the asthma drug Advair, its top-selling product. Symbicort has been sold in Europe for more than five years, but getting it in the United States market has been a long process. Most analysts did not expect the drug to win F.D.A. clearance until 2007, in part because the agency is often cautious in clearing inhaled respiratory drugs. A spokesman for AstraZeneca, Chris Major, said the company had not started selling Symbicort immediately because it wanted to show that the drug had a shelf life of at least 18 months. At the moment, the company has only enough data to prove 12 months.