

# Annual Report by the Director

1998 Reporting Period

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## Synopsis



Pharmaceuticals are a small but very important component of the waste stream affecting every household in British Columbia. Unused pharmaceuticals pose a significant health, safety and environmental hazard when improperly stored or disposed to the environment.

In response to this concern, the pharmaceutical industry voluntarily established the BC EnviRx pharmaceuticals stewardship program in November 1996. At that time, pharmaceutical brand-owners requested that the province expand the scope of the Post-Consumer Residual Stewardship Program Regulation (BC Reg.111/97) to include **pharmaceutical products** in order to ensure a level playing field for all producers through universal participation in the program.

The regulation, passed on March 27, 1997, required all brand-owners of pharmaceutical products sold in B.C. to take cradle-to-cradle responsibility for the safe management of their products which would otherwise enter the household hazardous waste stream.

### ***In 1996 the pharmaceutical industry established the BC EnviRx stewardship program***



To implement the program, the BC Pharmacy Association undertook to administer the BC EnviRx stewardship program which ensures that leftover and potentially hazardous unwanted prescription drugs, non-prescription medications and mineral supplements can be returned by consumers to pharmacies for safe disposal.

### **Performance**

There are 643 retail pharmacy outlets collecting unwanted pharmaceutical products province-wide.

The BC EnviRx program has reported the following collection results:

For the period November, 1996 to April 30, 1998:

- Collected and disposed - 6,703 kg

For the period May 1, 1998 to April 30, 1999:

- Collected and disposed - 10,104.5 kg

***BC EnviRx operates at no additional charge to consumers***



### **Program Funding**

The regulation does not permit brand-owners to charge consumers a fee to return regulated product residuals in order to ensure consumers are not discouraged from properly disposing their waste medicines. The pharmaceuticals industry has chosen to internalize the cost of the BC EnviRx program and does not assess additional fees to the public at the point of sale.

**New Developments**

There has been interest expressed in expanding the scope of the BC EnviRx stewardship program to include used syringe collection, however, these products are not currently regulated and a number of outstanding safety and management issues remain to be resolved.

In order to ensure that consumers are properly informed of their options for properly disposing unwanted medications, ministry staff will be working closely with representatives of the pharmaceutical industry to enhance the level of public awareness of the program over the coming months.

***Program promotion and communications efforts remain an ongoing challenge for the pharmaceutical industry***



**Additional Consumer Information**

<a href="#">B.C. Recycling Hotline</a>	Greater Vancouver (604) 732-9253 (R-E-C-Y-C-L-E) Outside Greater Vancouver 1-800-667-4321
BC Pharmacy Association	(604) 279-2053
Ministry of Environment	Greg Tyson (250) 387-7980 Dave Douglas (250) 356-9832

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