

Annual Report by the Director

1999 Reporting Period

Synopsis

Pharmaceutical products are a small but important component of the waste stream which will eventually affect virtually every household in British Columbia. Unused pharmaceuticals can pose a significant health, safety and environmental hazard when improperly stored in the home or disposed to the environment.

Unused or expired prescription and non-prescription medications and vitamin and mineral supplements are accepted at pharmacies across BC

To address this concern, pharmaceutical brand-owners voluntarily established a stewardship program to collect and manage unused consumer medications in November, 1996. At that time, the industry also requested that the province expand the scope of the Post-Consumer Residuals 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, requires all brand-owners of prescription and non-prescription medications and vitamin and mineral supplements sold in BC to take cradle-to-

grave responsibility for the safe management of residuals of these products which would otherwise enter the household special waste stream.

Performance

There are nearly 650 retail pharmacy outlets accepting unwanted pharmaceutical products from householders province-wide. For the period of April, 1999 to March, 2000, the program reports the collection of 11,479 kg for an overall program total of 28, 286 kg.

Over 28,000 kg of unwanted medications have been safely disposed since 1996

Given the nature of these wastes, incineration is the accepted best management practice for managing residual medications collected by the program. Over this reporting period, residual pharmaceuticals were transported by licensed waste transporters to special waste incineration facilities in Alberta.

Program Funding

Brand-owners are not permitted under the regulation to charge consumers any fees to return regulated product residuals to ensure consumers are not discouraged from properly disposing their waste medicines. The pharmaceutical industry has chosen to fund the program directly and no fees are assessed to consumers at the point of sale.

New Developments

In early 1999, the BC Pharmacy Association (BCPhA), which had served as the program administrator since 1996, advised the pharmaceutical brand-owners and the ministry of its

intention to withdraw from its formal role in the program. To replace the BCPHA, the industry established the Post-Consumer Pharmaceutical Stewardship Association (PCPSA) in December, 1999, as an independent not-for-profit body to coordinate the program. Residuals Management Group Ltd. of New Westminster, BC, has been contracted by the association to manage the program's day to day operations.

In order to formalise the new administrative structure and detail the program's intentions respecting program promotion, the PCPSA is expected to submit a revised stewardship plan to the ministry in autumn, 2000.

Further Information

Recycling Hotline of BC	Greater Vancouver (604) 732-9253 (R-E-C-Y-C-L-E) Outside Greater Vancouver 1-800-667-4321
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Ron Driedger, P. Eng.,
Director, Pollution Prevention and Remediation Branch