

Annual Report by the Director

2001 Reporting Period

Medication products are a small but important component of the waste stream with implications to virtually every household in British Columbia. Unused medications can pose a significant health, safety and environmental hazard when improperly stored in the home or disposed of in the environment.

Program Performance

As of December 2001, the Post-Consumer Pharmaceutical Stewardship Association (PCPSA), through its program administrator the Residuals Management Group Ltd, reports that about 680 retail pharmacy outlets, representing over 90% of all pharmacies in British Columbia, accept unused and expired medications from consumers. This represents a 23% increase in participating pharmacies.

For the 12-month period ending December 2001, the program collected 10,500 kg of unused or expired post-consumer medications. This is a 10% increase over the 2000 calendar year. The total residual medications collected since the program's inception is 43,300 kg.

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

Program Funding

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

New Developments

The revised Medications Return Program was approved by the ministry in 2001 and the program was relaunched under this new name in March 2001. This relaunch included a new communications plan that included consumer brochures and posters for pharmacies. Improved public awareness of the program has resulted in an increase of residual medications being returned to participating pharmacies. Industry continues to monitor collection results to ensure the public communications program continues to be effective.

Since March 2000, the Residuals Management Group Ltd. of Surrey, BC, has assumed the program's day-to-day operations on behalf of the PCPSA.

Anticipated changes to the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Clear Language Regulation in 2002 may require operational modifications to the program. These changes should not affect service to the public.

Further Information

RCBC Recycling Hotline of BC:

Greater Vancouver — (604) 732-9253 (R-E-C-Y-C-L-E)

Outside Greater Vancouver — 1-800-667-4321

For further information about the Post-Consumer Residual Stewardship Program Regulation, refer to the ministry's website.