

Annual Report by the Director

2002 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 to the environment.

Program Performance

As of December 2002, the Post-Consumer Pharmaceutical Stewardship Association (PCPSA), through its program administrator the Residuals Management Group Ltd, reports that approximately 719 retail pharmacy outlets, representing over 86% of all pharmacies in British Columbia, accept unused and expired medications from consumers.

For the 12 month period ending December, 2002, the program collected * 18,881 kg of unused or expired, post-consumer medications. The total residual medications collected since the program's inception is 62,181 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.

* Change over to new UN approved collection containers (as required by the [Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act](#)) during the last quarter of 2002 resulted in volumes of residual medications that normally would have been reported in the following year (2003) to be reflected in 2002 results. It is expected that early 2003 collection results will reflect this irregularity.

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 re-launched under this new name in March 2001. This re-launch 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. Since the re-launch of the program, the volumes collected have grown by 35%. The association will continue to work with municipalities to include the Medication Return Program in the municipalities' annual refuse information mailout to their residents. 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.

Changes to the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Clear Language Regulation in 2002 resulted in operational modifications to the program. These changes did 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 regarding the Post-Consumer Residual Stewardship Program Regulation, refer to the ministry's website.