



California State Board of Pharmacy

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STATE AND CONSUMER SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, GOVERNOR

**Communication and Public Education Committee
Meeting Summary
October 14, 2005**

**400 R Street, Suite 4080
Sacramento CA 95814
9:40 – 11:40 a.m.**

In Attendance: **Andrea Zinder, Chairperson**
 Bill Powers, Board Member
 Richard Benson, Board Member
 Kenneth Schell, Pharm.D., Board Member
 Patricia Harris, Executive Officer
 Virginia Herold, Assistant Executive Officer

Also Present: **Stanley Goldenberg, Board President**
 John Jones, Board Member
 Judi Nurse, Supervising Inspector
 Robert Ratcliff, Supervising Inspector
 Jan Perez, Legislative Coordinator

Chairperson Zinder called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

Development of Consumer Fact Sheet Series with UCSF's Center for Consumer Self Care

The committee reviewed the three new fact sheets developed by UCSF pharmacist interns. Ms. Herold stated that these fact sheets had only been recently received by the board and had not yet been reviewed.

Of special interest to the committee is the "Don't Flush Your Medicines Down the Toilet!" fact sheet. Chairperson Zinder stated that it conveys important information not frequently known by the about the public about the improper disposal of prescription medication down toilets or in landfills. This fact sheet will be sent to the Department of Health Services for its comments on the disposal technique listed.

The committee discussed the need for future materials on flu shots in light of recent articles questioning the value of flu shots. The committee suggested that encouraging pneumonia shots may be a worthwhile fact sheet.

Ms. Herold added that a fact sheet on the Beers list of drugs that should not be prescribed for those over 75 years of age will be done by the UCSF interns.

Ms. Herold added that since the July Board Meeting, there have been no further discussions with the Center for Consumer Self Care on the joint Web site for housing the consumer fact sheet series. This project will be pursued in the future as more fact sheets are developed. The goal of the Web site is to make it easier for the public to find the fact sheet they want from the many that the board and center hope will be housed there.

Activities of the California Health Communication Partnership

There have been no meetings of the partnership since the July Board Meeting. The next partnership meeting is planned for the end of October.

The committee reviewed the most recent project of the partnership, a campaign stressing the need for cancer screenings for men and women. Copies of the public services announcements and consumer articles developed were shared. A grant was obtained to permit wider distribution of these materials.

The next project will be a renewed campaign highlighting generics. Also the board may resume promotion of the antibiotic misuse campaign initiated last winter.

The committee discussed the emerging health issues surrounding the virulent avian flu. Health advocates are looking with concern for the potential for a global pandemic of this disease. Staff will bring this issue to the partnership. Staff will also contact the Centers for Disease Control to see where this agency is in terms of developing public information, and how public health organizations will be directed to respond.

New Labeling Requirements for Prescription Containers Begins January 1, 2006

The committee reviewed an article that will appear in *The Script's* October 2005 edition on California's requirements that medication labels contain a description of the appearance of the medication beginning January 1, 2006.

The committee suggested that this become another consumer fact sheet developed by the pharmacist interns.

Article on Prescription Errors for the *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*

The committee discussed the opportunity offered to the board, specifically to Dr. Schell, to write an article on the board's philosophy of disciplining pharmacists for prescription errors.

The editor of the *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy* has asked several boards to respond with articles on whether pharmacists should be disciplined for prescription errors, or repeated medication errors, how these matters are investigated and the priority given to investigating such complaints. Also at what point does the board consider a pharmacist, rather than a system, to be at fault?

The article is not desired for publication until mid-2006, so Dr. Schell will develop a draft and bring it to a future committee meeting. Discussion is also likely to occur during the October Board Meeting on the topic.

Update of *The Script*

The committee reviewed preprints of the October 2005 *The Script*. The newsletter will be mailed to pharmacies and wholesalers in mid-October. A copy will be online before the October Board Meeting. The issue focuses on pharmacist and wholesaler education about new laws.

The Education Foundation of California is mailing the issue to all California residing pharmacists.

The next issue is planned for January 2006, and will focus on new pharmacy law.

Update of *Health Notes*

Two issues of *Health Notes* are underdevelopment, but neither issue has a completed and edited manuscript. Production of "Pain Management" and "Disaster Response by Pharmacy" is not likely before the summer of 2006.

FDA's Useful Written Consumer Medication Information

The committee discussed the FDA's July *Federal Register* notice (and deadline) seeking comments about the usefulness to consumers of written information that accompanies prescription medication. The committee

also discussed the NABP's response that was shared with the committee, which was essentially a resolution that NABP work with interested stakeholders, including manufacturers, to encourage that all prescription labels contain a pictorial representation or description of the appearance of the medication.

In California, the appearance of the medication must be provided on a container's label in January 2006.

However, the committee expressed the need for more work in this area since according to a national survey conducted in 2001, only 50 percent of the 89 percent of the people who receive written information with their medications find the written information useful.

Chairperson Zinder and Board Member Benson both stated that their organizations would be interested in sending out the mass mailings of the completed fact sheet describing the importance of reviewing the physical description of medication that will be required to appear on the label.

The committee also suggested that in addition to a fact sheet highlighting looking for the description of the medication on the label, that another fact sheet be done on advising patients about the usefulness of other information on a prescription container's label.

UCSD Study on Legalizing Nonprescription Syringe Sales

Richard Garfein, PhD., MPH, has asked the board's help in conducting a study of pharmacist's perceptions to the legalization of syringe sales without a prescription as a means to prevent the spread of disease. Board Member Powers stated that he encourages the board's support and participation in this study which is also being done in conjunction with the Department of Health Services' Office of AIDS.

Executive Officer Harris has agreed to assist this study by providing a list of pharmacist and pharmacy addresses and review of the survey document. A letter was also mailed providing the board's encouragement of the study.

Miscellaneous Consumer Articles in the Media

The committee reviewed consumer articles appearing in the media recently.

The committee also noted that October is Talk About Prescriptions Month, and reviewed recent public information from the National Council on

Patient Information and Education (NCPIE) that was an originator of Talk About Prescriptions Month.

The board hopes to be able to participate in promoting Talk About Prescriptions Month in the future. The partnership will be approached about initiating activities for next year's event.

Update on the Board's Public Outreach Activities

The committee reviewed the public outreach activities of the board and board staff. The activities reported are:

- Supervising Inspector Nurse presented information about the board and how it investigates cases to a group of United States attorneys on July 20.
- Supervising Inspector Nurse participated in a training module for federal investigators who will be monitoring fraud in the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan programs in San Diego on September 20.
- The board staffed a public information booth the City of Sacramento Public Safety Public Fair on September 24.
- The board will staff a public information booth on October 15 at the UCD Healthy Aging Fair where 750 people will attend.
- Supervising Inspector Ratcliff will present information on pharmacy law changes at a UFCW-Orange County Pharmacist Association continuing education conference on October 16 to approximately 200 pharmacists.
- The board will staff an information booth at CSHP Seminar on October 21 and 22.
Several board members will present information at this association meeting.
- Supervising Inspector Ming will present information about pharmacy law to a group of UCSD pharmacy students in mid-November.
- Assistant Executive Officer Herold will present information about the board to a group of UCSD pharmacy students on November 28.
- Supervising Inspector Ming will present information about sterile compounding to a group of pharmacy technician students at Santa Ana College on November 30.
- Board Member Jones will present information about pharmacy technology at the NABP Fall Conference in December.

Adjournment

There being no additional business, Chairperson Zinder adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.