



**COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Date:** January 31, 2018

**Location:** Department of Consumer Affairs  
DCA Headquarters Building  
1625 N. Market Blvd., 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Hearing Room  
Sacramento, CA 95834

**Committee Members Present:** Ricardo Sanchez, Public Member, Chairperson  
Debbie Veale, Licensee Member, Vice Chairperson  
Victor Law, Licensee Member

**Committee Members Not Present:** Ryan Brooks, Public Member  
Amjad Khan, Public Member

**Staff Present:** Virginia Herold, Executive Officer  
Anne Sodergren, Assistant Executive Officer  
Laura Freedman, DCA Staff Counsel  
Kelsey Pruden, DCA Staff Counsel  
Bob Dávila, Public Information Officer

**1. Call to Order and Establishment of Quorum**

Chairperson Sanchez called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established.

**2. Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda, Matters for Future Meetings**

There was no public comment.

**3. Presentation by Ramón Castellblanch, Ph.D., Regarding Prescription Drug Overdose Prevention and Corresponding Responsibility**

Former board member Ramón Castellblanch presented information about the growing number of opioid deaths from overdoses and the effectiveness of naloxone in reversing

overdoses. He said pharmacy board websites can be valuable educational tools for stopping overdoses and offered a sample from the Kentucky Board of Pharmacy website. The Kentucky website features a prominent box on the homepage that links directly to a separate website dedicated to opioid overdose prevention.

Dr. Castellblanch also said he found confusion among California pharmacists about what corresponding responsibility is, about how to use CURES and about calculating morphine equivalents. He said some states require CE about the opioid epidemic for pharmacists, including Iowa, Florida and Oregon. He said more needs to be done to educate pharmacists about the opioid epidemic.

Committee members thanked Dr. Castellblanch for his presentation. Ms. Herold noted the board has provided training on naloxone and corresponding responsibility to about 700 pharmacists at CE seminars cosponsored with the DEA around the state. The committee discussed the importance of educating pharmacists about naloxone and “red flags.” Members directed staff to explore ways to make information about naloxone and “red flags” more visible on the website, including a main button on the homepage that links directly to the information on the website.

The committee and members of the public also discussed the importance of getting pharmacists more comfortable and proactive in speaking to patients, parents and the public about naloxone and stopping opioid overdoses. The discussion also included comments about patient resistance to getting naloxone because of perceived stigma; issues of insurance coverage and reimbursement for naloxone; and possible CE credit for training on how to host a drug take-back collection bin.

#### **4. Discussion and Consideration of a Proposal for a Public Service Billboard Message and Related Communications Materials on Drug Abuse**

Chairperson Sanchez reminded the committee at the November 2017 board meeting, the board considered several possible messages presented by the committee for a billboard about drug abuse prevention. The board directed Chairperson Sanchez and Ms. Herold to make the final selection and to work on the project with Outfront Media.

Chairperson Sanchez reported that he and Ms. Herold chose “Use, Don’t Abuse” for the billboard message. He said they also selected a final overall design for the billboard – including the message, artwork and the Board of Pharmacy logo and website.

Chairperson Sanchez said prescription drug abuse information on the board’s website is being revamped with a fresh look and resources. He said the billboard would be featured on the homepage and would serve as a link to a separate webpage dedicated to information about drug abuse and where to dispose of unused medications.

Chairperson Sanchez reported the billboard design is being prepared for submission to Outfront Media. He said staff would have the new webpage up and running before the billboards are erected, with a goal of completion this spring.

The committee requested that information about drug take-back collection sites from multiple resources be centralized into a single locator map. Members emphasized keeping the list of resources simple and easy for consumers to use while also expanding the scope beyond prescription drugs to include other forms of substance abuse. The committee directed staff to keep moving forward with the project and to provide an update on progress at the next meeting.

Heidi Sanborn of the California Public Stewardship Council (CPSC) urged the committee not to launch the webpage without a locator map for collection bins. Otherwise, she said, consumers might dispose of unwanted drugs by simply flushing them.

**5. Discussion and Consideration of Possible Options for Consumer and Pharmacist Education Regarding Safe Medication Transitions for Patients upon Discharge from Health Care Facilities and Any Necessary Statutory or Regulatory Changes**

Chairperson Sanchez reminded the committee that at the July 2017 board meeting, the board directed the committee to discuss developing materials to educate consumers and pharmacists about the importance of having a patient medication history on hand when being admitted to a hospital. He said the board also asked staff to develop public outreach materials on this topic for the website.

The committee received printed information provided by Rita Shane, Pharm.D.; and a January 2018 [article](#) from U.S. News and World Report, “9 Strategies for Reducing Emergency Room Medication Errors.” Committee members discussed how to convey information about safe medication transitions to two distinct audiences – consumers and pharmacists.

The committee directed staff to explore ways to inform consumers about compiling and carrying a current medication inventory through various media, including the board’s website and the DCA’s blog, publications and social media accounts. The committee also staff to produce a *Script* article about the role of pharmacists in reducing medication errors during patient stays in hospitals. Members suggested sharing the *Script* article with other healing arts boards to share with their licensees.

The committee also discussed contacting pharmacy schools to ask if their curriculum includes training related to safe medication transitions. In addition, the committee also heard public comments from Dwight French of Wellspring Pharmacy in Oakland about how his pharmacy is starting a project with Alameda Health System to be a part of the hospital’s care transition program.

**6. Discussion and Consideration of Educational Materials Regarding Drug Take-Back Collection Receptacle and Providing Public Access to Such Information**

Chairperson Sanchez reminded the committee that at the July 2017 board meeting, the board directed the committee to develop consumer information on accessing drug take-back programs.

Staff reported that forms to report [installing or discontinuing a collection receptacle](#) and to report [tampering, damage or theft of a receptacle](#) are now posted on the board's website. Staff said the registration forms would be used to develop an online locator function for consumers to find drug take-back programs in their communities.

The committee asked how many registered collection receptacles were now in place. Staff reported that the forms were only recently made available online and that registrations had just started coming in. Ms. Herold said she received letters in January from some pharmacies reporting a total of about 200 collection bins statewide. She added that staff would remind pharmacies that the registration forms are now available in a *Script* article.

During public comments, Heid Sanborn of CPSC told the committee that her group would be happy to share its collection bin locations for inclusion on the board's website.

**7. Discussion and Consideration of Creating Webinar Course to Satisfy Education Requirement for Pharmacists to Furnish Naloxone**

Chairperson Sanchez reminded the committee that SB 493 authorized the board to address the problem of restricted public access to naloxone. The board responded with an emergency regulation in 2015 and a permanent regulation in 2016 establishing a protocol for pharmacists to furnish naloxone without a prescription.

Chairperson Sanchez also noted that last year, the board and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) cohosted training sessions for pharmacists throughout the state that included one hour of CE credit to meet the education requirement of the naloxone protocol. The board and DEA are planning additional training sessions in 2018.

Staff requested the committee consider approval of a proposed webinar course to satisfy the one-hour CE requirement for furnishing naloxone. The course was developed by Talia Puzantian, Pharm.D., of Keck Graduate Institute School of Pharmacy and James J. Gasper, Pharm.D., California Department of Health Care Services.

During public comments, Dr. Gasper told the committee that the course material has been well received by pharmacists in several rural counties where it was presented in person. Ms. Herold said the webinar course would be an important part of the naloxone

materials on the board’s website. She added that the webinar would include a means for pharmacists to self-certify their participation and receive one hour of CE credit.

**Committee recommendation:** Create a webinar course using the materials presented by Dr. Gasper to satisfy the education requirements for pharmacists to furnish naloxone.

M/S: Veale/Law

Support: 4    Oppose: 0    Abstain: 0

Name	Support	Oppose	Abstain	Not Present
Brooks				X
Khan				X
Law	X			
Sanchez	X			
Veale	X			

**8. Discussion and Consideration of UC Berkeley Study of the Availability of Contraception Prescribed by Pharmacists in California**

Chairperson Sanchez reminded the committee that SB 493 authorized California pharmacies to dispense hormonal contraception without a prescription. The board adopted a protocol for pharmacists to furnish self-administered hormonal contraception without a prescription in April 2016.

The committee received a UC Berkeley study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in December 2017 that reported only 11 percent of California pharmacies are dispensing hormonal contraception to women without a prescription.

The committee took no action. During public comments, Dr. Gasper said issues surrounding wider availability of contraception are similar to the problems with naloxone, including reimbursement for the pharmacist’s services.

**9. Update and Discussion of FDA Proposal to Increase Consumer Protection from High-Risk Homeopathic Drugs**

Chairperson Sanchez informed the committee that in December 2017, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced plans to change the way it regulates homeopathic drugs to a new approach based on potential risk to patients. The FDA said the new policy would focus on enforcement and regulation of homeopathic drugs that pose the greatest risk to patients.

Mr. Law noted that many homeopathic drugs are actually home remedies used in immigrant communities and imported from other countries. He said some of these

remedies may have ingredients that are actually harmful to patients, and they should be monitored and regulated by the FDA.

Ms. Herold noted that the FDA has begun issuing more recalls of homeopathic products. Ms. Veale noted that some pharmacy chains carry sections of homeopathic drugs and suggested sending out more subscriber alerts about recalls of these products.

The committee agreed to continue monitoring FDA activities in this area before considering whether board action is warranted.

The committee took a break at 10:50 a.m. and returned at 11:11 a.m.

**10. Discussion and Consideration of FDA Guidance, “Evaluating Drug Effects on the Ability to Operate a Motor Vehicle”**

Chairperson Sanchez reminded the committee that in April 2017, the board amended Title 16, California Code of Regulations [section 1744](#), to require pharmacists to include a written label on prescription drug containers warning the drug may impair a person’s ability to operate a vehicle or vessel. He noted the regulation identifies specific classes of drugs that may impair a person’s ability to drive a vehicle or vessel, and it requires pharmacists to add a warning to the container of any drug that, based on a pharmacist’s professional judgment, may impair a person’s ability to operate a vehicle or vessel.

The committee received a copy of an FDA guidance, “Evaluating Drug Effects on the Ability to Operate a Motor Vehicle,” issued in November 2017. The guidance notes the importance of preventing motor vehicle accidents that result from drug-impaired driving and the need for drug manufacturers to evaluate the effect of a drug on driving ability.

Committee members agreed that CCR section 1744 is comprehensive and needs no amendment.

**11. Discussion and Consideration of Journal of the American Pharmacists Association Article, “Enhancing the Educational Value of Direct-to-Consumer Advertising of Prescription Drugs”**

Chairperson Sanchez informed the committee that a study in the September/October 2017 issue of the Journal of American Pharmacists Association looked at how well consumers understand and retain information about the benefits and risks of a prescription drug that is conveyed in direct-to-consumer advertising (DTCA) by pharmaceutical companies.

Chairperson Sanchez said the study compared an original print DTCA with an ad modified by health literacy principles. The modified ad avoided medical terms, used

simple plain language, and was printed in at least 12-point font with information written at or below eighth-grade reading level.

Chairperson Sanchez reported that participants who viewed the modified ad understood and retained information about the drug's benefits and risks better than participants who viewed the original DTCA. He said the study suggested that risk information presented in the original DTCA was overwhelming for consumers.

Committee members agreed that the point of the study was beyond the committee's scope and took no action. Members noted that pharmaceutical advertising often is used by consumers to pressure doctors to prescribe medications that may not be needed.

## **12. Discussion and Consideration of Annual Report of the Research Advisory Panel of California**

Chairperson Sanchez informed the committee that California Health and Safety (HSC) Code sections 11480 and 11481 require research projects using certain Schedule I and Schedule II controlled substances as their main study drugs to be reviewed and authorized by the Research Advisory Panel of California. He noted the panel includes a member appointed by the Board of Pharmacy, Patrick R. Finley, Pharm.D.

Staff provided a copy of the advisory panel's recent annual report to the Legislature and the Governor. The committee took no action.

## **13. Discussion and Consideration of Granting Continuing Education Credit for Reading *The Script***

Chairperson Sanchez reminded the committee that at the November 2017 board meeting, members discussed the importance of *The Script* as a tool to communicate important information and training for licensees. He said members asked the committee to discuss and consider possible efforts to encourage readership, including possibly awarding CE credit for reading the newsletter.

The committee agreed that *Script* articles provide information worthy of CE credit. Ms. Veale noted that the board already awards CE for attending board and committee meetings. Members noted that the board requires two hours of CE on law and ethics. Ms. Veale and Ms. Herold said reading *The Script* could be applied to the requirement by awarding one CE credit for each issue read, up to a maximum of two hours.

Members discussed how to verify reading the newsletter. Ms. Herold said pharmacists could be required to self-certify reading *The Script*, just as they self-certify under penalty of perjury earning CE for renewing their licenses. Mr. Law and Ms. Veale suggested requiring pharmacists to pass a quiz included with *The Script*. Ms. Herold noted that,

depending on how the test is developed, the process could require additional staff time to accept the test, check the result and process the CE certificate.

The committee directed staff to report back on the feasibility of attaching a quiz to the newsletter that would require a participant to answer correctly before moving to the next question.

During public comment, Paige Talley said her members support awarding CE for reading *The Script* because it is hard for them to attend board and committee meetings. Danny Martinez of the California Pharmacists Association said CPhA would not oppose the idea but believes a quiz on the newsletter should be required to earn CE credit.

**Committee recommendation:** Direct the Communication and Public Education Committee to pursue awarding CE credit for reading *The Script* that would apply to the board requirement to earn two hours of CE in law and ethics.

#### **14. Update and Discussion of Communication and Public Education Activities by Board Staff**

##### **a. Communication Plan for Consumers and Licensees**

The committee received an update on staff activities since the previous committee meeting.

##### **b. The Script**

Staff reported that publication is imminent. The issue will highlight new pharmacy laws for 2018.

##### **c. News Media**

The committee received a list of recent media interviews and information requests provided by Ms. Herold and Mr. Dávila.

##### **d. Public Outreach**

The committee received a list of recent public outreach activities by staff.

#### **15. Review and Discussion of News or Journal Articles**

The committee received a list summarizing several recent news articles about pharmacy issues.



## **16. Future Meeting Dates**

Chairperson Sanchez reminded the committee of future meetings scheduled for 2018:

- April 25, 2018.
- July 11, 2018.
- Oct. 11, 2018.

The meeting adjourned at 11:41 am.