



FCPMC · FPACC



RETURNED GOODS/UNSALEABLES FOCUSES ON R_x & OTCs

The Returned Goods/Unsaleables Committee (RGU) is presenting the industry with a set of draft recommendations, which includes a "one box" industry solution for the handling of unsaleable R_x & OTC products and policy harmonization.

RGU Co-chair, Allison Anisef of Medis explains, "The 'one box' recommendation incorporates a two-pronged approach which recognizes the inherent need for proper audit trail and disposal for R_x and OTC products. Our goal was also to present a simplified process, for all parties, reducing both the physical movement of goods as well as the accounting and other administrative activities. We feel policy harmonization is another critical issue which is currently hindering efficiencies."

R_x - "ONE BOX CONCEPT"

Returned goods/unsaleables are placed in a designated box and forwarded to a centralized service provider for verification and processing. Provider issues payment to "returnee" with returns data. Goods are disposed of as per manufacturer instructions and applicable disposal laws.

POLICY HARMONIZATION

Policy harmonization is recommended in order to achieve a more streamlined, simplified process particularly in the area of administration.

"We are in the process of meeting with the Boards of the various ECR_x Associations to explain the concept and obtain feedback. Response has been encouraging and we are addressing the constructive feedback," states RGU Co-chair, Judy Porter of Pfizer. To solicit additional industry input, ECR_x "round table" sessions were hosted in March.

"The Returned Goods/Unsaleables Committee has put forward an extensive and well thought-out solution for the pharmacy industry to seriously consider. To truly put the concept to the test, the Canadian Association of Chain Drug Stores has offered to pilot the concept with two of its chain members, Zellers and Lovell Drugs," comments ECR_x Stakeholder Co-chair Ray MacDonald, VP & GM, Lawtons Drugs. The committee continues to meet to map-out next steps and develop a pilot project.

ECR_x CO-CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENT

In February, Ray MacDonald, Vice-President & General Manager, Lawtons Drug Stores Limited, was appointed co-chair of the ECR_x Stakeholder Committee. We welcome Ray to his new post and thank him for his leadership of the ECR_x initiative!

GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY TACKLE E-COMMERCE FOR CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

ECR_x was instrumental in convincing the Therapeutic Products Directorate (TPD) of Health Canada to establish a working group to address the special security concerns posed by e-commerce for narcotics and controlled substances. "This is a huge coup for ECR_x as the existing guidelines don't reflect the reality of the supply chain today," states Nigel Wood, Director of Industry Relations, at the Electronic Commerce Council of Canada. Called the Advisory Panel for the Electronic Transmission of Information (APETI), this committee is made up of ECR_x association representatives, government, industry and other key stakeholders. It is now in the process of developing a set of draft guidelines for the safe and secure electronic ordering of narcotics and controlled substances. The issue of E-signatures is included in this process. ECR_x committee members are reviewing the initial recommendation, which, will be submitted to the government for approval.

IN MEMORIAM

Leonard Marks, past ECR_x Stakeholder co-chairman, died on March 9 after fighting a courageous and quiet battle with a medical condition known as Scleroderma.

"Lenny will be remembered for the countless contributions he made to the pharmacy industry during his 24-year career at London Drugs and during his term as my fellow Co-chairman of the ECR_x Stakeholder Committee. His leadership and friendship leaves a legacy that our industry is truly grateful for," stated ECR_x Stakeholder Co-chair Aldo Baumgartner, Wyeth-Ayerst Canada.

EUREKA! BIG BAR CODING SOLUTION FOR SMALL VACCINE VIALS

In October 1999, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), passed a resolution recommending that Health Canada consider the inclusion of bar codes on immunizing agents as a required labelling component. The use of a bar code on, or packaged with, both the primary packaging (eg. vials, ampoules, pre-filled syringes, etc.) and secondary packaging (outer package) would provide the necessary means to enhance immunization record-keeping and improve inventory management.

Although this sounds like a simple request, how on earth will a bar code fit on vaccine vials? The feasible solution: Reduced Size Symbology (RSS). RSS is a family of symbologies to address space-constrained products. The new symbologies, RSS-14", RSS Limited®, RSS Expanded® as well as the composite portion of these codes, will expand the capability of the current tool-set, not replace what already works. At the core is a 14-digit identifier that can be married with a composite portion to encode supplementary data, including lot numbers and expiration dates. This means that products that in the past were impossible to mark with a "regular" bar code, can be identified as easy as a pack of gum. Inroads are currently being made with the National Advisory Committee on Immunization as they are now looking at the RSS technology as a possible solution for the unique identification of vaccines.

WILL XML REPLACE EDI?

Wait. Before we answer this question, what the heck is XML anyway? XML, like its more familiar counterpart, HTML (Hypertext Markup Language), is a markup language that uses tags or sets of codes to instruct a computer how to handle a text file and uses the internet to leverage communication between trading partners. While HTML has primarily focused on how the information is displayed or formatted for printing, XML goes much deeper. XML uses these tags to give the information greater functionality, including richer content and the ability to facilitate the transmission and integration of business information. XML can and is being used by smaller enterprises.

Now the answer to the question: Will XML replace EDI? No, "XML is truly seen as a complement and in many cases will run in parallel with existing EDI infrastructures. With the financial investment and systems most organizations have dedicated to EDI, it would be premature to think that XML will simply replace EDI. One could consider it as possibly being the evolution from EDI, along with other standards" replies Art Smith, President of the Electronic Commerce Council of Canada.

EXECUTIVES REAFFIRM THEIR COMMITMENT TO ECR_x

On February 7, the nine ECR_x Associations wholeheartedly agreed to continue to work together to build on the successful momentum that ECR_x has already realized. "ECR_x plays a very important role in helping the pharmacy industry understand and embrace the initiatives that create an efficient and up-to-date supply chain process," says ECR_x Co-chair, Aldo Baumgartner, President & CEO, Wyeth Ayerst.

Nearing completion of its original mandate (Barcoding, EDI, ECCnet and Returned Goods/Unsaleables), the ECR_x committee discussed next steps for the initiative. Here is a summary of its resolutions:

- To develop, educate and communicate supply chain best practices
- To endorse and communicate industry and global standards
- To follow and educate about industry trends and global initiatives
- To identify priority issues for the industry to adopt
- To advise on adoption timelines
- To monitor industry adoption levels and identify barriers preventing organizations from achieving deadlines
- ECR_x will not enforce industry compliance

ECR_x Associations:

Canadian Association of Chain Drug Stores
Canadian Cosmetic, Toiletry & Fragrance Association
Canadian Drug Manufacturers Association
Canadian Pharmacists Association
Canadian Wholesale Drug Association
Electronic Commerce Council of Canada
Food and Consumer Products Manufacturers of Canada
Nonprescription Drug Manufacturers Association of Canada
Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies

Canadian Association of Chain Drug Stores
Monika Simon
416-226-9100
www.cacds.com

Canadian Pharmacists Association
Jeff Posten
1-800-917-9489
www.cdnpharm.ca

Electronic Commerce Council of Canada
Art Smith
416-510-8039
www.eccc.org

Nonprescription Drug Manufacturers Association of Canada
Robert White
613-723-0777
www.ndmac.ca

Canadian Cosmetic, Toiletry & Fragrance Association
Charles Low
905-890-5161
www.cctfa.ca

Canadian Wholesale Drug Association
Christina Bisanz
416-222-3922
www.cwda.com

Food and Consumer Products Manufacturers of Canada
Elaine Smith
416-510-8024
www.fcpmc.com

Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies
Murray Elston
613-727-1380
www.canadapharma.org

Canadian Drug Manufacturers Association
Julie Tam
416-223-2333

Visit www.ecrx.org