

Supply Chain News

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ECRx

EFFICIENT CONSUMER RESPONSE FOR THE PHARMACY SUPPLY CHAIN

CACDS 



 CDMA

 Canadian Pharmacists Association
Association des pharmaciens du Canada



ECCC 

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New format!

Now that ECRx is well underway, ECRx Supply Chain News has been revamped into a Bulletin for an easy-to-read update of the progress of this value-based initiative. Full details from the launch of ECRx were published in September 1998 and January 1999 and can be viewed online at www.ecrx.org, or ask your association representative for back issues.

ECRx has made tremendous progress in a short period of time. The two opening enablers - EDI and Barcoding, both fundamental to supply chain improvement practices - now feature a complete set of recommended standards and guidelines together with implementation timelines, as announced in January 1999.

So where are we now?

One of several ongoing objectives of the ECRx initiative is to monitor progress and report back to the group. This feedback provides valuable insight regarding implementation or acceptance levels as well as a look at the rate of advancement for the pharmacy supply chain overall. Additionally, any barriers to implementation may be identified early and recommended non-proprietary solutions can be developed.

New Returned Goods/ Unsaleables sub-committee struck.

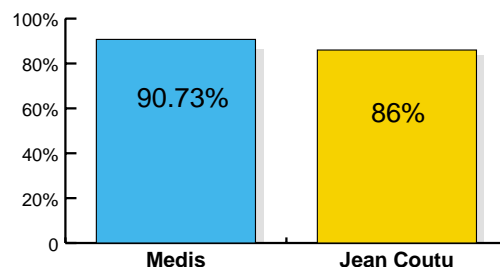
The ECRx Stakeholder committee has given the go-ahead for a new group to develop non-proprietary solutions for Returned Goods/ Unsaleables. The new subcommittee has set three goals:

1) reduce incidence, 2) simplify processes and 3) determine accountability for associated costs.

Update on Barcoding

In May 1999, ECCC undertook a survey of UPC assignments for Rx products on behalf of ECRx. More than 22,000 SKUs at Jean Coutu and another 4,500 SKUs at Medis revealed a 90% UPC assignment level.

% of Rx Products Coded With a UPC



Aldo Baumgartner, President & CEO of Wyeth-Ayerst Canada Inc. and ECRx Stakeholder Committee Co-Chair was pleased with the results. "As prescription drug manufacturers, we have had a lot of catching up to do, compared to the OTC and HBA suppliers in the pharmacy chain, and I think that we have done a good job of it. Our 90% is very close to the expected 100% level as per the March 1999 guideline. Indications are that the missing 10% will be usurped as stock turns."

Baumgartner adds that the "assignment of UPCs is a relatively easy first step and certified exemptions are attainable from outside agencies if the Rx product format precludes application to the package by the December 1999 timeline." Manufacturers should also have assigned

SCC-14 case codes by March with scannable application by December 2000.

Did You Know? The U.S. Department of Defence reports that barcoded data records an error rate of 1 in 3 million transactions, compared to 1 in 300 for manual data entry. An improvement rate of 10,000 %!

Update on EDI

Defined as "the electronic exchange of business documents (purchase orders, invoices, shipping notices, etc.) from one organization's computer to another organization's computer in standard data formats," the number of companies worldwide using EDI is expected to quadruple by 2001. "Early electronic interchanges that relied on proprietary formats between trading partners first emerged in the 60s," says Rick Zeller, VP Supply Chain Management at Shoppers Drug Mart and Co-Chair of the ECRx Enabler Committee, "and has now given way to a standardized global business language that will drive the phenomenal growth in the use of EDI." The ECRx recommended standard - the VICS (Voluntary Industry Communication Standard) 4010 fits this global language and is Y2K compliant.

ECRx guidelines call for the implementation of PO and invoice transaction sets by year-end. Early monitoring, also conducted by ECCC, shows that a phased-in implementation plan is underway. Survey participants involved in pilots or tests with trading partners and often, in conjunction with EDI Solution Provider companies, fully expect to be able to meet the December 1999 target.

EDI Solution Provider Directory

If you are not currently piloting EDI transaction sets with a business partner, you should get started right away. Companies engaged in EDI transition often embark on EDI conversion with the assistance of a third party solutions provider, or a value-added network. These companies work with you to facilitate EDI implementation and can be found in the new Electronic Commerce Solution Providers Directory, compiled by ECCC. Intended as a reference guide, not as an endorsement of published companies, the Directory is available at no charge from ECCC at 1-800-567-7084, ext. 2280 or for download at www.eccc.org.

Upcoming

Watch for a series of breakfast seminars to be staged this fall. These early morning events will be an interactive forum for presentation and discussion of current and future ECRx activities.

Update on ECCnet - The Central Product Catalogue

Canadian retail, including the pharmacy sector, is fast approaching the technological marvel of a centralized, electronic repository of products and related information which make everything from planogramming to EDI possible. ECCnet, operated by the ECCC, is a non-proprietary, internet-based industry catalogue. The leading-edge technology ensures security, data integrity and the unprecedented opportunity to input data once for access by all retail trading partners regardless of industry or channel. Len Marks, Director at London Drugs and Co-Chair of the ECRx Stakeholder Committee says they can hardly wait for the launch of ECCnet. "The timeliness of the flow of information and the universal application of one data entry is truly the coming-of-age of electronic commerce between trading partners." Continues Marks, "This is where we as an industry will really start to reap the benefits of all our transitional work to date and see unprecedented efficiencies."

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