

Washington State Medicine Return Pilot Program

2007 Pharmacy Evaluation Surveys of Participating Group Health Pharmacies

Findings

May 2007

Washington Citizens for Resource Conservation

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Over the course of the pilot, multiple surveys were conducted to contribute to the assessment of the Medicine Return Pilot Program. The purpose of the surveys was to evaluate both pharmacy staff satisfaction of the program and patient/customer perception of the issue and the program. This summary report describes the start-of-pilot surveys performed in April and May of 2007, a few months after the start of the two year pilot program. In this document, there are brief descriptions of the start-of-pilot surveys including basic methods used and primary results.

Summary of Surveys

Evaluation Objectives:

1. Pharmacy staff satisfaction with the take-back pilot program.
2. Customer satisfaction with the take-back program, future-use plans and how customers learned about the program.

Evaluation Methods:

1. Pharmacy staff online survey sent to all Group Health participating pharmacy staff.
2. Group Health pharmacy patient self-administered written survey at four select participating pharmacy locations.

Summary of Pharmacist Survey Results

WCRC surveyed pharmacy staff at the seven Group Health locations currently participating in the Medicine Return Program. We contracted with Cunningham Environmental Services to assist in developing survey questions. There was a 54% response rate (68 individuals responded out of 125 possible staff members). They were given just less than one week to respond and offered an incentive of entering into a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to Amazon.com.

We found:

The Medicine Return Project generally demands little time of pharmacy staff.

- 69% of staff have spent less than one hour in the last six months on program maintenance, inquiries, etc.
- Only 3% have spent more than ten hours in the last six months on the program.

Most of the pharmacy staff members think the program is effective.

- 69% think the program is extremely or very effective
- 94% think the program is somewhat, very, or extremely effective
- No respondents think the program is not at all effective.

Pharmacy staff members generally are not yet telling very many patients about the program.

- 50% have told ten or fewer patients about the program in the last six months.
- On average, pharmacy staff have each told 19.4 patients about the program in the last six months. (Calculation based on median value for categorical range response).

On the whole, comments received by staff from the patients have been very positive.

- 76% of respondents stated comments were very positive
- 95% stated comments were somewhat or very positive
- No respondents stated comments were negative.

To improve the program, pharmacy staff want larger collection containers but also suggest more publicity and changes to the signage.

- 56% of respondents want bigger internal collection containers
- 47% suggest better or more publicity within Group Health
- 28% suggest changes be made to the instructions posted on the container

Summary of Patient Survey

WCRC surveyed pharmacy patients at four select Group Health locations currently participating in the Medicine Return Program. We contracted with Cunningham Environmental Services to assist in developing survey questions. The surveys were self-administered with nine questions. There was a 41% return rate (400 surveys were put out and 162 were returned). Clinics were surveyed for one week and patients were offered an incentive of a drawing for a \$50 gift card to Fred Meyer.

We found:

Perception of environmental impact:

- 46% of respondents that chose “protecting the environment” as the main benefit of the program had previously thought (before hearing about the program) that disposing to drain or garbage was either “not at all harmful” or “not very harmful”.
- “Protecting the environment” was the most chosen main benefit of the program while only 1% of respondents selected “there are no benefits”.
- 76% of respondents chose “protecting the environment” as a benefit (main or additional) of returning medicines.

Patient support of the program:

- 53% said they were either “extremely likely” or “very likely” to return medicines in the next six months.
- 13% of respondents have already used the program.
- When asked for additional comments or questions, 39 of the 47 responses indicated that this program is a good idea and there were no negative comments.
- When asked about benefits to having this program, zero customers chose “I don’t think there are any benefits”.

Outreach efforts:

- 44% learned about the program through Group Health brochures or signage (note: this result conflicts with results of observation portion of evaluation below and pharmacy staff survey above).
- 10% learned about the program through a Group Health publication
- Some were already aware of the program from outreach methods outside of Group Health (4% Media and 6% word of mouth).
- 45% of respondents learned about the program for the first time when completing the survey.