



**California State Board of Pharmacy**

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

## **Communication and Public Education Committee**

Minutes of the Public Meeting of September 22, 2006

Department of Consumer Affairs  
El Dorado Conference Room  
1625 N Market Boulevard  
Sacramento, CA 95834

9:30 – 11 a.m.

Present: Bill Powers, Board President and Acting Chair  
Hank Hough, Board Member

Virginia Herold, Interim Executive Officer  
Karen Cates, Assistant Executive Officer

Absent: Ken Schell, Board Member and Chair  
Andrea Zinder, Board Member

### **Call to Order**

Chairperson Powers called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

### **Discussion of SCR 49 Prescription Error Study Panel**

John Gallapaga, a public member of the SCR 49 Prescription Error Study Panel, updated the committee on the topics the panel is considering to recommend for reducing medication errors.

He asked for board policy in a number of areas, including assurance that a pharmacist provide a full consultation with a patient. The consultation would include discussion about other medications, OTC drugs and herbal supplements a patient may take.

Ms. Herold commented that the Notice to Consumers poster that must be displayed in pharmacies is one method the board uses to aid consumers in learning about their medications and seeking consultation from a pharmacist.

The panel is also looking at new medication labeling and prescription vials to improve label information. Legible prescriber handwriting continues as a problem that can lead to prescription errors. Recommendations in these areas are under consideration by the SCR 49 panel.

Current California law allows a patient to request that the medical condition for which a drug is being prescribed be added to a prescription container's label. The panel is considering whether this should be mandated. The committee mentioned that legislation to require this was introduced several years ago and amended to the "upon the patient's request provision" in current law. One of the concerns against this requirement is patient privacy about having the condition listed on the label.

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

Since July 2004, the board has been working with the Center for Consumer Self Care at the University of California San Francisco to integrate pharmacy students into public outreach activities. The project involves pharmacist interns developing consumer fact sheets.

William Soller, PhD., of the Center for Consumer Self Care attended this meeting and reviewed four new fact sheets.

These are:

- An Aspirin a Day? . . . Maybe, Check it Out!
- Uncommon Sense for the Common Cold
- Medication Errors Mistakes Happen . . . Protect Yourself!
- Putting the Chill on Myths about Colds and Flu

The committee recommended some changes and submitted these to Dr. Soller.

Meanwhile, the board is translating the initial nine fact sheets already developed into Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese. These versions should be available in late fall.

### **Activities of the California Health Communication Partnership**

Dr. Soller also updated the committee on recent activities of the California Health Communication Partnership. This group is spearheaded by the UCSF's Center for Consumer Self Care to improve the health of Californians by developing and promoting consumer health education programs and activities developed by the members in an integrated fashion. The function of the group is to develop or disseminate integrated public information campaigns on priority health topics identified by the partnership members.

The current campaign is cancer screening: "It's Your Life – Do It Today" and is aimed at men and women aged 50-75 years of age.

The UCSF has obtained a grant from a private foundation, which will enable use of a firm (the North American Precis Syndicate) that specializes in dissemination of public service announcements and prewritten articles to a diversity of media outlets nationwide. The partnership successfully used this service last year for the successful initial campaign on prostate and breast cancer screening.

The committee discussed other topics, including development of an outreach campaign on generics, which is another planned project of the partnership.

### **Status of *The Script***

The September issue of *The Script* was printed and mailed to California pharmacies. This issue was designed in-house (as opposed to using graphic designers at the State Printing Plant) by staff Analyst Victor Perez.

The Pharmacy Foundation of California has agreed to publish and mail this newsletter to the state's pharmacists.

The next issue will be in January 2007 and will highlight new pharmacy laws.

### **Study of Patient Medical Literacy**

The committee reviewed the results of a recently released study dealing with patient medical literacy. This study found that most people had only intermediate health literacy. This means that "a majority of U.S. adults will have some difficulty using health-oriented materials with accuracy and consistency." The study, based on data from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy, involved 19,000 individuals. The data indicate that that fewer than one in six persons is proficient in health literacy.

Generally:

- Whites and Asian adults had higher health literacy rates than blacks, Hispanics and American Indians.
- Hispanic adults had the lowest health literacy rates.
- Adults older than 65 had lower health literacy rates than younger age groups
- Women had slightly higher health literacy than men.

Low health literacy results in patients not understanding medical instructions and terms, and leads to higher costs and poor health outcomes. The statistics underlie the importance of patient education – by pharmacists and other health care providers as well as by this board. The data also emphasize the need to provide appropriate tools for patients to educate themselves.

### **Development of New Consumer Materials**

Ms. Herold announced that with the new state's budget on July 1, the board has received restoration of a half-time position for its public education and licensee education duties. The board will fill this position on a full-time basis because the need is so great. Currently the vast majority of public and licensee information is developed by the assistant executive officer and a retired annuitant. Interviews were conducted last week and a new person will be hired shortly.

No new brochures have been developed during the last quarter.

#### Web Site Modification:

The new Web design for the board's Web site should be in place and online in about two weeks.

#### Prescription Errors

Staff is planning to add a section to the board's Web site dealing with prescription errors for both pharmacists and patients. Included will be articles, data and links to other resources on how to prevent errors for health care practitioners. Patients will be advised about what they can do to minimize their risks for being a victim of an error.

#### **AB 2583's Requirements to Add to the "Notice to Consumers"**

The committee reviewed proposed language that would be required to be added to the Notice to Consumers poster by the enactment of Assembly Bill 2583 (Nation). This bill was passed by the Legislature and is awaiting action by the Governor.

If enacted, the bill would require the board to add a statement that describes a patient's right to obtain medication from a pharmacy:

1. even if a pharmacist has ethical, moral or religious grounds against dispensing a particular drug, in which case protocols for getting the patient the medication is required.
2. unless based upon the pharmacist's professional training and judgment that dispensing a drug is contrary to law or the drug would cause a harmful drug interaction or otherwise adversely affect the patient's medical condition.
3. unless the medication is out of stock or not available from the pharmacy.
4. unless the patient cannot pay for the medication or pay any required copayment.

At the last committee meeting, the committee recommended that the board comply with AB 2583 by developing a new and second poster because the content of the new notice would be so different from the current required language.

The committee reviewed without comment a draft (perhaps too broad and wordy) to encompass the required text and yet inform patients about their rights to medication and pharmacist care:

***Did you know that/(or Your rights as a patient):***

California law requires a pharmacist to provide medicine that has been legally prescribed for a patient, except for specific reasons.

For example, a pharmacy is not required to provide medicine without reimbursement.

If you cannot obtain your medicine from the pharmacy, ask the pharmacist why.

If the pharmacy does not sell your medicine or is out of it, you may be referred to another pharmacy.

If the pharmacist has ethical, religious or moral reasons for not personally providing you with a specific medicine, the pharmacy must provide an alternative means for you to obtain it.

***Talk with your pharmacist:***

The pharmacist is required to talk to you about all new prescription medicine the first time you receive it. The pharmacist will also answer your questions about your medicine any time.

Information from a pharmacist is important to your health because it can make certain you know what is important about your medicine therapy. Pharmacists are educated to be the experts in medicine therapy,

***Contact the Board of Pharmacy:***

Pharmacies and pharmacists providing prescription medicine to patients in California must be licensed with the California State Board of Pharmacy.

You can contact the board with questions using the information below (address, phone number and web address).

**Miscellaneous Consumer Articles in the Media**

The committee reviewed various miscellaneous articles published in the media regarding medication issues.

## **Evaluation of the Board's Consumer Materials**

At the last committee meeting, Board Member Schell suggested that the committee initiate a consumer survey of its consumer materials to learn if the material has value for the public.

The committee reviewed some interview questions that will be asked of consumers at forthcoming public outreach events scheduled for the fall. The board has "thank you" items to provide to those who participate in the survey (weekly pill dispensers, potato chip bag clips, magnets).

The following questions will form the basis for the survey:

- What questions do you have about the medicine you take?
- Do you get enough information about how to take your medicine? What questions do you have?
- Did you take any materials prepared by the Board of Pharmacy today? Why or why not?
- The Board of Pharmacy is a consumer protection agency that licenses pharmacists and pharmacies. Do you have questions about your pharmacist or pharmacy?
- Do you know what education a pharmacist must have?
- Are there other languages besides English that you need material in?

The committee also reviewed a telephone survey conducted by a private firm employed by the board in 2000 of consumers' opinions about the board and the importance of readily available information about medications.

## **Update on the Board's Public Outreach Activities**

The committee reviewed the board's public outreach and licensee education programs. In the last quarter, there have been two law pharmacy law presentations to professional associations or other professional groups.

- Supervising Inspector Ratcliff provided a law update at the Competency Committee's Annual Retreat Meeting on August 4.
- Supervising Inspector Ming presented information about pharmacy law to 80 pharmacists at a California Employees Pharmacist Association Meeting on August 13.

## **Adjournment**

There being no additional business, Chairperson Powers adjourned the meeting at 11 a.m.