


EPR Workshop: Exploring Solutions for Sharps

January 18, 2012



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Management Authority**

Funded by a grant from the California Department of
Resources Recycling & Recovery (CalRecycle)

Why Are We Here

- ☞ Chinese Proverb: ***‘If we do not change our direction, we may end up where we are headed.’***
- ☞ Each and every improperly disposed sharp is a concern.
- ☞ TakeBack and EPR programs are appropriate for all materials banned from disposal – including sharps. These approaches are more efficient and cost effective, and include important feedback loops to producers to reduce the hazards and improve recovery of their products.
- ☞ Under a grant from CalRecycle, DNSWMA has worked with CPSC to promote EPR and TakeBack, and was to include a local pilot program for sharps.

Establishing Sharps Collection Pilot Project

Outreach to national & international potential program participants

- ❖ Introductory letter sent to 200 sharps producers, retailers and distributors
- ❖ 1 response received from Open Door Clinic
- ❖ 0 Volunteers from producers

Outreach to local potential program participants

- ❖ Follow up letter sent to 48 businesses that use or distribute sharps, and potential retail take-back locations
- ❖ 2 responses received; 1 from a doctor's office 1 from interested retailer stifled by corporate
- ❖ 0 interest in VoluntaryTakeBack

Barriers to Participation

- ☞ Momentum of Status Quo:
 - Local health and safety concerns drive home generated sharps collection points to be at local government facilities.
 - Concerns about illegal disposal drive most public agencies to offer this costly service at no charge, requiring subsidy from some other source of revenue.
- ☞ Local Government offering free services. Retailers and distributors of sharps are mostly interested in reducing their costs without increasing risks or hassles, so most are NOT interested in TakeBack.
- ☞ Sharps producers have refused to share in the collection and cost of managing sharps.

Losing Opportunities

- ∞ Lacking support (from producers or retailers) to establish TakeBack programs, there are only four options:
 - **Run with it, even if you go backwards** - Local government digs in deeper by establishing costly (and largely ineffective) programs and infrastructure for hazardous products it does not design, distribute, or sell.
 - **Drop the ball** - Local government abdicates this responsibility, letting the problem worsen in hopes this will motivate all for a better solution later.
 - **Local mandate by Ordinance**
 - **Statewide mandate by legislation**
- ∞ Lacking a TakeBack mandate, retailers and distributors rarely train their staff to emphasize proper containers and procedures for proper sharps disposal.
- ∞ Lacking EPR, sharps manufacturers lack incentives to re-design products to foster separation of sharps from injectors by home users, or to create simple TakeBack systems for sharps.
- ∞ Confucius: *'He who will not economize will have to agonize.'*

Contact

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