Dear Pharmacy Professionals,

Health Canada has published new documents that update its direction on the destruction of post-consumer returns and unserviceable stock containing narcotics, controlled drugs or targeted substances which will come into effect in 6 months. The NSCP Professional Practie Policy: Destruction of Unusable and Expired Controlled Drugs and Substances is consistent with this direction and not been amended.

- Guidance document for pharmacists and dealers licensed to destroy narcotics, controlled drugs or targeted substances Handling and destruction of post-consumer returns containing narcotics, controlled drugs or targeted substances
- Guidance Document for Pharmacists, Practitioners and Persons in Charge of Hospitals Handling and Destruction of Unserviceable Stock Containing Narcotics, Controlled Drugs or Targeted Substances.

Health Canada has provided the following highlights for pharmacy:

The post-consumer returns guidance document sets out procedures for pharmacists involved in the collection, handling and destruction of unused or expired drug products containing a narcotic, controlled drug or targeted substance returned by an individual consumer:

- Health Canada will no longer require the recording of the name of the drug products associated with post-consumer returns. Consequently, the requirement to separate post-consumer returned controlled substances from other post-consumer returned prescription or non-prescription medications will no longer be in effect;
- The guidance documents require the treatment of post-consumer collection bins as if they contain controlled substances, regardless of the actual content. It is highly recommended that post-consumer returns are stored in single-use, one-way entry collection containers that are opaque, inconspicuous, tamper-evident and have a unique identifier;
- The guidance documents replace two Circular Letters (official notices sent to targeted stakeholders) previously sent to pharmacists, practitioners, persons in charge of hospitals, and dealers licensed to destroy narcotics, controlled drugs or targeted substances;
- The unserviceable stock guidance document will set out procedures for practitioners, pharmacists and persons in charge of a hospital involved in the handling and destruction of these products.

Comments or questions about either of these documents should be directed to hc.compliance-conformite.sc@canada.ca