International Fact Sheet

Pharmaceutical and Sharps EPR: Sweden

Rev: 7/16/18

Sweden’s pharmaceutical practice was a government run monopoly until it was deregulated in 2009 to a non-profit organization called the Swedish Pharmacy Association. In 2009, the Regulation 1031 on producer responsibility passed and requires any pharmacy to receive medicinal products from the public without compensation and inform their patients about the take-back program.¹

Organizing Body:
Saco, the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations, is a politically independent central organization with 23 unions, one of which is the Swedish Pharmacy Association (SPA). The SPA is a non-profit organization consisting of nine member companies representing nearly 100% of the pharmacy market in Sweden.¹ These companies include Apoteket, Apotek ICA, Apotek, Apoteks gruppen, Lloydsapotek, Apoex, Apotea, Djurfarmacia, SOAF.¹

Costs & Funding:
Producers, defined as the retailer of medicinal products, are responsible for the collection of medicinal products, without compensation, proportional to the amount dispensed. Municipalities are responsible for the transportation and recycling or disposal of household waste.⁹

Program Facts:
According to a 2007 survey conducted by the SPA, 85% [of Swedes] knew that correct disposal was to return unused medicines to a pharmacy and 43% had in fact returned their medicines to a pharmacy during the last 12 months.³

In collaboration with the government the pharmaceutical industry created the Swedish Environmental Classification of Pharmaceuticals Database which allows patients to view the environmental impacts of their medications and choose the least harmful option.⁴
After a country wide disposal awareness campaign in 2012, **reported disposal of unused drugs into waste bins was reduced to 3%**.  

**2017 Statistics on Swedish Pharmaceuticals:**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Sales</td>
<td>162,039,420 packages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weight produced and sold</td>
<td>9,722 tons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average # of packages sold</td>
<td>16/person</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantity of non-used drugs collected</td>
<td>1,200 tons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of non-used drugs collected</td>
<td>12% sold</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-used drugs collected per person</td>
<td>4.2 ounces/year</td>
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**Collection Locations & Accessibility:**

The number of pharmacies has increased by over **45 percent**, from 946 stores in 2009 to 1,391 stores in 2017.

Three out of four Swedes have **less than a five minute drive to the nearest pharmacy**. Nine out of ten reach a pharmacy within ten minutes’ drive.

Loyalty programs are in place in many pharmacy chains to reward customers that bring them medicine waste.

**Timeline:**

- **1575:** Sweden’s first Pharmacy opened up in Stockholm
- **1971:** Several functions centralized and nationalized to form a state-owned monopoly
- **December 2009:** State monopoly was abolished and regulation (2009:1031) was passed on producer responsibility
- **March 19-April 16 2012:** Information campaign to increase awareness of pharmacies as sole take back location for unused medications took place in 1200 pharmacies

**References:**