

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, Djurfarmacía, SOAF.¹



Swedish Confederation of Professional Association:

Swedish Pharmacy Association:



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%.**⁸

2017 Statistics on Swedish Pharmaceuticals:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Total Sales | 162,039,420 packages |
| Weight produced and sold | 9,722 tons |
| Average # of packages sold | 16/person |
| Quantity of non-used drugs collected | 1,200 tons |
| Percent of non-used drugs collected | 12 % sold |
| Non-used drugs collected per person | 4.2 ounces/year |

Collection Locations & Accessibility:

The number of pharmacies has increased by over **45 percent**, from 946 stores in 2009 to 1,391 stores in 2017.⁵

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.⁷

Loyalty programs are in place in many pharmacy chains to reward customers that bring them medicine waste.¹

Timeline:

1575: Sweden's first Pharmacy opened up in Stockholm⁶

1971: Several functions centralized and nationalized to form a state-owned monopoly⁶

December 2009: State monopoly was abolished and [regulation \(2009:1031\)](#) was passed on producer responsibility¹

March 19-April 16 2012: Information campaign to increase awareness of pharmacies as **sole take back location** for unused medications took place in 1200 pharmacies¹

References:

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5. "The Swedish Pharmaceutical Market: Competition and Pricing Post-Deregulation" *konkurrensverket* accessed July 2018 [Web](#).
6. "About the pharmacy Industry" *sverigesapoteksforening* accessed July 2018 [Web](#).
7. "Myths and Facts" *sverigesapoteksforening* accessed July 2018 [Web](#).
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