



**REPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2017**

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**SUBJECT**     **BC Medications Return Program – Collection of Household Veterinary Medications**

**ISSUE**

Residential (household) quantities of veterinary medications are not included in the BC Medications Return Program (BCMRP), which is overseen by the Health Products Stewardship Association (HPSA).

**BACKGROUND**

The Capital Regional District's (CRD) Regional Source Control Program (RSCP) protects the district's sewage collection and treatment facilities, the marine receiving environment, and public health and safety by reducing the amount of contaminants that industries, businesses, institutions and households discharge to sanitary sewer systems.

The RSCP has promoted the BCMRP to its residents since 2008, with the goal of improving the quality of wastewater and sludge discharged to the local environment. This initiative has achieved a 400% increase in the annual amount of medications returned to participating pharmacies within the region since 2007. In the past 4 years, however, returns have stabilized at approximately 11 tonnes of medications per year.

In April 2017, the CRD launched a new campaign promoting the BCMRP called "What you put down the drain matters!", with the aim of increasing awareness, increasing the amount of medications returned and protecting the receiving environment. A series of events, accompanied by radio, print and social media advertising, continued through June 2017, with up to 40 pharmacies participating throughout the region.

In order to capture greater amounts of medications in future, staff recommend that the Board advocate to the provincial government to extend BCMRP collections to unused or expired veterinary medications purchased by residents. The BC Recycling Regulation (BCRR), as currently written, does not allow for collection of household veterinary medications. An amendment to the regulation would be required to achieve this and enable greater amounts of medications to be returned in the region.

The HPSA is the organization responsible for the funding and operation of the BCMRP. Any changes to this program would have to be considered and approved by the HPSA. Staff have had initial conversations with HPSA to discuss the proposal to include veterinary medications with the BCRR.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

That the Environmental Services Committee recommend to the CRD Board:

### *Alternative 1*

That the Board Chair write letters to:

- (a) the BC Minister of Environment requesting an amendment to the BC Recycling Regulation to allow collection of household veterinary medications under the BC Medications Return Program; and
- (b) the Chair of the Health Products Stewardship Association requesting its support in implementing changes to the BC Medications Return Program.

### *Alternative 2*

That this report be received for information.

## **SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Once the requested amendment to the BCRR is adopted, and the HPSA has implemented appropriate changes, householders throughout BC will be able to take expired or unused veterinary medications to local pharmacies participating in the BCMRP for proper disposal.

## **ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS**

There are no cost implications to the RSCP budget for 2017. Messaging regarding veterinary medications being included in the BCMRP can be incorporated into residential outreach materials and media within the approved budget. There is no direct cost to consumers (or pharmacies). Currently, the manufacturers and distributors of medications in BC pay into a fund, managed by HPSA, to support the BCMRP. This would likely apply to veterinary medications.

Veterinary clinics, as commercial entities, are not permitted to use the BCMRP to dispose of their own waste medications. The BCMRP is strictly for residential medication collections. Veterinary clinics must engage hazardous waste management companies to dispose of their own waste medications, at significant cost. Following appropriate amendment of the BCRR, and changes to the BCMRP, these costs to clinics could be reduced as residents dispose of their waste medications at participating pharmacies instead of the veterinary clinic.

## **CONCLUSION**

The RSCP has promoted the BCMRP to its residents since 2008. The BCMRP does not currently accept household veterinary medications. In order to increase medication returns within the region, an amendment to the BC Recycling Regulation would be required and changes to the BCMRP would have to be approved and implemented by the HPSA.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Environmental Services Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

That the Board Chair write letters to:

- (a) the BC Minister of Environment requesting an amendment to the BC Recycling Regulation to allow collection of household veterinary medications under the BC Medications Return Program; and
- (b) the Chair of the Health Products Stewardship Association requesting its support in implementing changes to the BC Medications Return Program.

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