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Environmental Practices: Statement on Responsible Environmental Practices for Hospital Pharmacy (2001)

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Environmental Practices: Statement on Responsible Environmental Practices for Hospital Pharmacy

HOSPITAL PHARMACY DEPARTMENTS SHOULD TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MINIMIZING THE AVOIDABLE WASTE ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR OPERATIONS AND UTILIZE INFORMATION AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO MANAGE THE UNAVOIDABLE WASTE.

Responsibility for environmental practices is best enforced through departmental and facility policies and procedures. In developing recycling policies, pharmacists must ensure that confidentiality of patient records is respected. Facility-wide disposal policies shall be reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate. The CSHP Guidelines for Handling and Disposal of Hazardous Pharmaceuticals should be consulted.

General considerations for waste reduction can include:

- a) promotion of reduce-reuse-recycle programs on a hospitalwide basis;
- b) using double-sided photocopies;
- c) recycling and reusing paper wherever possible;
- d) computer order entry and moving to electronic charting;
- e) use of computer mail systems for memos, minutes, etc.;
- f) use of reusable containers for delivering medications to nursing stations (e.g., tote bags, bins);
- g) selection of a hospital-wide intravenous medication delivery system based, in part, on an evaluation of which system will generate the least amount of waste (e.g., minibag, syringe pump, buretrol/soluset);
- h) use of bulk vials wherever possible;
- i) use of a multidose syringe for batch admixing;
- j) standardized IV solution concentrations (e.g., heparin, theophylline);
- k) standardized doses of certain medications (e.g., cefuroxime for pediatrics);
- l) providing limited products, with low potential for medication error (e.g., liquid antacids and laxatives) in bulk containers to reduce packaging waste;

- m) reviewing expiry dates to reduce medication wastage; and,
- n) encouraging manufacturers to use environmentally responsible packaging material.

Hospital pharmacy departments, individually or through purchasing groups, have the opportunity to encourage manufacturers to produce an environmentally friendly product. Suppliers are the primary source of technical information pertaining to the constituent makeup of pharmaceutical products and disposal options. They can be encouraged to take actions to minimize the environmental impacts associated with the design and delivery of products to the marketplace, to the extent that such measures do not compromise product viability or integrity.

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