

Smoke-Free, Scent-Free, and . . . Pot-Friendly?

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Health Canada started its fall round of consultations in a pungent haze. On September 16, representatives of pharmacy organizations explored alternative mechanisms for the distribution of medicinal marijuana, including the conventional pharmacy-based system used for narcotics. CSHP presented the unique challenges that hospital pharmacists would face to provide seamless care to Canadians authorized to use marijuana under the Marijuana Medical Access Regulations (MMAR). The Government of Canada amended the MMAR in response to an October 2003 decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal that identified constitutional shortcomings with the MMAR. Health Canada plans additional consultations before making further amendments in 2004. In the meantime, the Interim Policy for the Provision of Marijuana Seeds and Dried Marijuana Product for Medical Purposes in Canada continues to govern the licit distribution of marijuana. (For additional information, see <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hecs-sesc/ocma>).

The next smoke signal from Health Canada invited us to a consultative workshop (October 20 and 21, 2003) on look-alike, sound-alike health product names. The workshop provided information for and sought feedback from interested parties about policy options, and proposed recommendations. (For the executive summary, go to <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/bgtd-dpbtg>).

The last consultation of the season that CSHP attended (November 2 and 3, 2003) was a smouldering engagement on improving Canada's regulatory process for therapeutic products, undertaken by the Public Policy Forum on behalf of Health Canada in May 2003. During this latest session, stakeholders contrasted the relative merits of alternative organizational models for the regulation of and access to therapeutic products, and identified critical elements of the Health Canada strategic plan to guide improvements to the regulatory process. (For the convening documents and presentations, consult <http://www.ppforum.ca>).

Behind the smoke screen, volunteer members and staff of CSHP have several noteworthy accomplishments to their credit. Our electronic member database underwent a long-overdue upgrade, the first since 1998. How do you like your electronic *EOB*? If you



are among those members still receiving the *EOB* in hard copy and you have an e-mail address, give the electronic version a try. It's convenient and expeditious! Based on the recommendations of the Website Task Force, we issued a request for proposals for the redesign of the CSHP Web site and hope to launch the new Web site, improved in look and function, by spring 2004. These 3 electronic improvements, which lie within the scope of CSHP's Vision 2006, demonstrate our commitment to supporting our members. I hope you made it to the 2004 Professional Practice Conference in Toronto to take advantage of the exceptional program designed by the Educational Services Committee, to congratulate the Award winners carefully selected by the Awards Committee, and to commend your peers on their new status as Fellows, conferred on the recommendation of the Board of Fellows.

And remember, if you don't inhale, not only will you stay smoke-free and scent-free, but you may also aspire to the American presidency!

If you are interested in additional information about any of the aforementioned issues, please contact the CSHP national office (see page 1 for contact information).

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