

County of Los Angeles Sharps and Pharmaceuticals Purchasing Power

At its June 18, 2009 meeting, the Task Force directed staff to look into what the County purchases in terms of sharps and pharmaceuticals and evaluate the purchasing power of the County with efforts to compel pharmaceutical companies to assist with the cost of managing home-generated sharps waste and pharmaceutical waste.

A brief update on the information gathered was provided at the August 2009 Task Force meeting. Staff reported that additional time was needed to more thoroughly research the issue. Following additional contacts, staff was able to gather the following information from the Los Angeles County Health (DHS) and Public Health Departments (DPH).

	Pharmaceuticals
	Cost to purchase (annually)
DHS (All County hospitals and DHS clinics)	\$180,000,000
DPH (14 DPH clinics)	\$1,300,000
	\$181,300,000
DHS and DPH mainly utilize one wholesale vendor, Cardinal Health to purchase pharmaceuticals for the County clinics and hospitals.	

	Sharps
	Cost to purchase (annually)
DHS (LAC+USC Health Care Network - 5 locations)	\$175,000
DPH (14 DPH clinics)	\$1,000,000
	\$1,175,000
DHS and DPH mainly utilize one wholesale vendor, Professional Hospital Supply to purchase sharps for the County clinics and hospitals.	

Relevant Statistics

- Based on a study conducted by UCLA Center for Health and Policy Research Institute, it is estimated that over 220 million sharps wastes are generated each year in Los Angeles County, primarily by diabetics.
- According to the Los Angeles County Injury hospitalization report, hypodermic needle sticks were a significant source of injury in the County with over 1,400 hospitalizations reported from 2000-2006, with an average cost of \$36,000 per visit to treat.

Relevant Legislation

SB 1159 – (Signed by Governor on September 20, 2004). Required registered pharmacies to provide for the safe disposal of sharps waste by either providing an on-site collection program, or having sharps mail-back containers available for purchase, or having regular sharps container available for purchase.

SB 1305 – (Signed by Governor on July 12, 2006). Banned home-generated sharps waste from trash disposal as of September 1, 2008.

AB 501 (Vetoed by Governor on February 20, 2007). Bill on extended producer responsibility for proper disposal of sharps waste. Although the Governor supports the safe and proper disposal of home-generated sharps waste, the bill was found to be insufficient. It narrowly focused on prefilled injection devices only and was vague on who would bear the cost of the containers.

SB 966 (Signed by Governor on October 12, 2007). With the lead of the California Integrated Waste Management Board, and in consultation with appropriate government agencies, established criteria and procedures for model programs for the collection and proper disposal of pharmaceutical waste. Provisions of SB 966 remain in effect until January 1, 2013.

SB 486 (Signed by Governor on October 11, 2009) - Legislation on extended producer responsibility for proper disposal of sharps waste. Requires manufacturers to have a plan for disposal of sharps waste for prescriptions requiring injections.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the County uses a master contract through ISD for the purchasing of pharmaceuticals and sharps. The County spends over \$180 million annually on the purchase of pharmaceuticals and over \$2 million annually on the purchase of sharps. Both departments pay a third party vendor to dispose of the pharmaceutical waste and sharps waste. It is estimated that these Departments spend over \$250,000 annually to dispose of pharmaceuticals, with the cost of sharps disposal undetermined at this point. Currently, there are no manufacturer/distributor take-back programs for pharmaceuticals or sharps.

The County Board of Supervisors passed a motion on October 13, 2009 asking the Departments of Health Services, Public Health, Fire, and Community and Senior Services to work with Public Works in efforts of utilizing existing County facilities to expand convenient collection opportunities for home-generated sharps waste. Through this motion, we hope to also work with the County distributors/manufacturers to take on the responsibility for take-back programs.

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

October 13, 2009

Everyday in the County of Los Angeles millions of home-generated sharps waste such as medical needles, lancets, and syringes are produced by individuals who self administer medications at home. If disposed of improperly, sharps waste poses a significant health risk to everyone, especially sanitation and landfill workers. In addition, surface waters, groundwater, and the ocean may be polluted as a result of leakage from leftover liquid in sharps devices.

Since last September, State law (SB 1305) prohibits the placement of home-generated sharps waste in trash and recycling containers, and requires the use of State-approved containers for the collection and transportation of sharps waste. State law also encourages local governments to implement and promote sharps collection programs to provide convenient and safe means for residents to dispose of their sharps waste.

To assist residents in complying with this new State law, in June 2008 Public Works in concert with Public Health and participating cities launched a new Sharps

(M O R E)

MOTION

MOLINA _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

YAROSLAVSKY _____

ANTONOVICH _____

KNABE _____

Waste Management Program. The aim of the Program is to make it as convenient as possible for residents to properly dispose of their sharps waste. Through this Program, Public Works provides State-approved, puncture-proof containers for residents to safely collect their sharps waste. These containers can be obtained free of charge at over 100 distribution sites.

Once filled, the sharps containers can be taken to designated collection sites for safe disposal. Designated collection sites currently include 8 permanent household hazardous waste collection centers and the County's weekly household hazardous waste collection events. In addition, the Department of Public Health took a proactive approach in joining Public Work's efforts to make available 14 public health clinics as collection sites for County residents to dispose of sharps waste. The disposal cost for the sharps waste is incurred by Public Health as part of their existing internal sharps waste program. In collaboration, Public Works assists with providing sharps containers for distribution, as well as outreach materials for public education. This collaborative partnership is a great example of departments working together to provide beneficial public service to the communities. Considering the size and population of Los Angeles County however, there is a need to expand the number of sites where residents can take their filled sharps containers. To the extent feasible, we should utilize County facilities for this purpose.

Certain County departments, such as the Fire Department, also have a need for proper disposal outlets for the sharps waste they collect when they treat patients through their emergency services. Thus, opportunities exist for additional collaborative

(M O R E)

partnerships between Public Works and other County departments for properly managing sharps waste and increasing public awareness.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors instruct the Director of Public Works, working in collaboration with the Directors of Health Services, Community and Senior Services, Public Health and the Fire Chief of the Fire Department to pursue the following actions:

1. Identify and evaluate the potential for utilizing additional County facilities, such as fire stations, pharmacies, hospitals, and other locations, as sharps collection sites.
2. Implement collection sites at the most feasible locations on a 12-month trial basis, based on the Public Health model highlighted above. Costs should be equitably shared amongst participating departments.
3. Assess the feasibility of providing approved mail-back containers to assist the elderly, disabled, and others who are unable to utilize the County's expanded network of sharps collection sites.
4. Submit a report to the Board within 18 months summarizing the results of this effort. The report should include but not be limited to the following:
 - a. Success of the trial collection sites in enhancing the Program
 - b. Barriers/challenges faced
 - c. Public outreach and education implemented
 - d. Cost analysis
 - e. Recommendations on making collection sites permanent, further expanding collection and other adjustments to the Program.