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## IN THIS ISSUE:

[Member Surveys:  
You tell us - we listen](#)

[The 'Top Eight'](#)

[Task Force  
Welcomes Members](#)

[On-line advice](#)



## Members Surveys: You tell us - we listen

These days it seems that every time we pick up a newspaper or magazine, log on to our computer, or answer a phone call, we are being asked to take part in yet another survey. But will our input have any influence on the product, service or practice in question?

As a HealthPRO member, we want you to know that we value your response to our annual survey and your input does, indeed, influence the way we serve you! Survey results are reviewed by the Pharmacy Advisory Council and are a key consideration in our strategic and business plan development. Before we dispatch our 2007 survey, we would like to give you a quick recap of the results of last year's survey and a progress summary of what we've done to respond to your feedback.

### First, the response rate

At an overall 21% of total membership, it was lower than we'd hoped. However, we're

confident that improvements to our distribution methods plus expanded use of an on-line survey option will encourage higher participation next time around.

### The questions – and responses

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following key statements related to perceived financial value, time savings, trust and confidence. The five-point rating scale ranged from 'Unable to Assess', 'Strongly Disagree', 'Disagree', and 'Neutral' to 'Agree', and 'Strongly Agree'.

**Q1.** Because I am a member of HealthPRO, my net acquisition cost for medications is less than if I were not a member.

• 98% agreed or strongly agreed

**Q2.** My purchasing operation is more effective than it would be if I were not a member of HealthPRO.

• 88% agreed or strongly agreed

**Q3.** HealthPRO effectively responds to my group purchasing needs.

• 85% agreed or strongly agreed

**Q4.** HealthPRO is implementing a business plan that will meet my future needs.

• 40% agreed or strongly agreed; 60% were neutral, unable to assess, or did not respond

***"Clearly, the members who responded are pleased with the financial value and time savings that we bring them. They also indicated a high level of trust and confidence in us.***

***However, while we have a comprehensive business plan in place, this survey tells us that we need to do a better job of communicating it."***

**- Kathy Boyle, VP Services**

***Have a question, concern or suggestion? Please contact Jenifer Martin, Director, Pharmacy Services at 905-568-3478, ext.340 or send an e-mail to [jjerlach@healthprocanada.com](mailto:jjerlach@healthprocanada.com).***

## The 'Top Eight'

From responses plus comments, we identified several common themes. Here are the 'top 8' along with a summary of action to date:

**Backorders:** *need more options/suppliers for back ordered products*

Backorder issues are common across health care and health product supply industry. By reconvening our *Backorder Task Force*, with member and supplier representation, we hope to facilitate more effective solutions. If you would like to be part of the Task Force, please contact us (see Task Force on right).

**Returns policies:** *can we negotiate credits for part packages?*

Vendor quality management is an important aspect of our services that we monitor closely. Returns policies, management of back orders, notice re discontinued products and working relations are just some of the considerations in our contract award decisions. A review of returns policies has been tabled for the September meeting of the Pharmacy Operating Committee. We'll keep you posted.

**Contract transition period:** *24 (confusing) hours*

A number of respondents noted that there are some challenges associated with contract renewal day. One example given was that, for the period of time before their databases are updated to reflect the new contract information, members may unwittingly buy 'off contract', potentially incurring additional costs.

We suspect that there are a number of contributing factors to

the problems experienced during the contract renewal period and we have tabled this issue for discussion by the Pharmacy Operating Committee (PAC-OC) in September. We know how important it is for members to have the right information at the right time and we plan to have ironed out existing glitches in good time for the next contract turnover.

**Business Plan?** *What business plan?*

In addition to a three-year corporate-wide strategic plan, Pharmacy Services, has its own three-year strategic plan and an annual business plan. These plans clearly define the service's future direction, with attention to member feedback, forecasted market conditions and many other factors. We are committed to communicating our business plan to members, however, survey responses indicate that this is an area for improvement. We will correct that oversight by including a synopsis of the plan in a future issue of *Tablet Times*.

**Formulary items on contract:** *can't we have more?*

It is critical to ensure that the breadth of contract offerings meets our members' needs while also achieving optimal economies of scale. After conducting a representative sampling of health facilities, we added almost 200 lines to our base this past fall. We have now established a regular process of systematic catalogue and therapeutic class reviews, as well as a methodical review of new products coming to market. Our clinical advisor will participate in this process to ensure that contract offerings are clinically up-to-date.

**Bar coding:** *we need more vendors to add it to their products*

The adoption of bar coding among vendors has been inconsistent. While it is not within our realm of authority to require a change in these practices we are trying to influence the industry. For example, our Product Evaluation Committee has proposed that, as of our next round of product evaluation and contract awards, higher ratings will be given for products that are individually bar coded. We anticipate that this change will help to influence suppliers to move forward with implementing universal bar coding.

**Rebates:** *we don't understand how they are calculated*

Rebates are one of several areas that members said they would like to better understand. The September issue of our corporate newsletter *Progress* will feature an article on this topic and we'll ensure that it is posted on our web site for future reference.

**Member communications:** *more is better*

This past year, we have renewed our commitment to keep members well informed. In addition to more regular newsletters and bulletins, future plans include making our corporate web site more informative and user-friendly. We have recently established HealthPRO Forum, a convenient new 'on-line' way for you to ask questions, discuss pharmacy related product or service issues, and access the wisdom and experience of the entire membership across Canada.

## Task Force Welcomes Members

Interested in being part of the 'Backorder Task Force'? (see "backorders" survey reference left). Contact **Kathy Boyle**.

**Contact information**  
*Have a question, concern or suggestion?*

Please contact **Kathy Boyle**, Pharmacy Services at 905-568-3478, ext.326 or send an e-mail to [kboyle@healthprocanada.com](mailto:kboyle@healthprocanada.com)

## On-line advice

**Experiencing a problem with product performance? Having a 'back order' issue? Got an idea for a product you'd like to see in contract offerings? Need speedy advice from others who've already 'been there'? HealthPRO Forum exists to help you with these needs and more!**

**Just go to [www.healthprocanada.com](http://www.healthprocanada.com). From the Home Page, go to Pharmacy Services, click on "Login to Pharmacy Forum" and follow the instructions.**