

The Canadian Journal of Pharmacy Students and Interns



CAPSIL • JACEIP

MARCH 1998

Pharmacy Awareness Week 1998 - A Look Across Canada

Janet Bécigneul, Canadian Pharmacists Association

Canadians were forming "healthy partnerships" with their pharmacists in record numbers last month as Pharmacy Awareness Week was launched in its new, spring time slot (March 2-8).

Pharmacists across the country participated in events at the individual, local, provincial and national level, making PAW '98 another hugely successful annual campaign. Pharmacy Awareness Week continues to grow in participation each year, which means the public hears more and more about our profession. In 1998, more newspapers published information about what pharmacists are doing to improve the health of Canadians, more radio campaigns were heard across the land, more governments at various levels became active partners in PAW and more corporate sponsors provided financial support. Most importantly, more pharmacists organized activities with their patients at the pharmacy level, in all practice settings. This participation is even more impressive when you consider that many were still wrapping up the PAW '97 campaign (November 3-9) when planning had to be in full swing for PAW '98.

The focus for PAW '98 was medicine cabinet clean-up and brown bag review. At the national level, organizers arranged for a medicine cabinet clean-up and brown bag review to be conducted with the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Health, Beth Phinney, the Member of Parliament for Hamilton Mountain. Ms. Phinney was extremely impressed with what she learned about her medications and health during the process, calling it an "eye-opening experience", and says she would highly recommend it. A blueprint for organizing this event has been developed in the hopes that it will be applied in arranging similar reviews with more M.P.'s, members of provincial legislative assemblies (MLA's), mayors, other community and business leaders and reporters so they can see, first-hand, the value of pharmacy services.

Pharmacy students at campuses across the country organized a variety of activities, including setting up information booths in malls and community centres. Others organized blood pressure clinics and medicine cabinet clean-ups on campus. Student organizers project that student pharmacists were able to advocate the role of the pharmacist to potentially thousands of other university students, including students in other health care professions.

Pharmacists organized at the provincial level in most provinces. During PAW '98, virtually every Canadian was able to return unused and outdated medications to the pharmacy for proper, environmentally safe disposal.

Plans are underway for an even bigger PAW in 1999.

For more information, contact Janet Bécigneul, PAW National Coordinator, at (613) 523-7877 or (800) 917-9489 ext.267. E-mail: media@cdnpharm.ca.