



Evaluation of the Common Drug Review and CCOHTA Response to Recommendations

The Common Drug Review (CDR) was established by federal, provincial and territorial governments to provide a single evidence-based process to generate timely common listing recommendations to participating drug plans. One of the requirements when the CDR was established was that the program be evaluated against its objectives following the first year of operation. This independent evaluation commissioned by CCOHTA in spring of 2005 and conducted by EKOS Research Associates Inc. responds to this commitment. A copy of the full report of the evaluation is available on the CCOHTA website at www.ccohta.ca.

The findings of the EKOS Evaluation of the Common Drug Review reflect that the founders of the process are pleased with the results of the first full year of operation of the Common Drug Review. The Evaluation indicates that industry representatives and consumer groups are not entirely satisfied with the Common Drug Review. We are committed to continuously improving the CDR wherever possible while assuring the CDR produces rigorous, timely, objective information about drugs. The following summarize the key recommendations from the report and the response from CDR to these recommendations.

Recommendation #1

The CDR Evaluation recommends the CDR should develop a process to communicate decisions and recommendations in a language that is not difficult for the general public to understand and appreciate.

CDR Response

CEDAC Recommendations and Reasons for Recommendation, which are summarized in a one- to two-page document and published on the CCOHTA website, are written for participating drug plans and health professionals. Understandably, it may be difficult for the general public to understand much of the information in these documents. CCOHTA is currently exploring options to engage the public in its operations. This will provide CDR with an opportunity to consider how to better communicate recommendations to the general public.

Recommendation #2

The CDR Evaluation recommends the Common Drug Review work with the pharmaceutical industry and individual companies towards making the CDR process more transparent for all stakeholders.

CDR Response

Striking a balance between full transparency (with complete disclosure of all information in the CDR review and CEDAC considerations) and the need to maintain a rigorous, objective process that also respects the protection of confidential information will continue to be a challenge. It is evident that the perception of transparency and its requirements differs across our stakeholders. Acknowledging this challenge, we will explore options to make the CDR process more transparent.

Recommendation #3

The CDR Evaluation recommends the CDR assess how best to incorporate public input into the CDR process.

CDR Response

CCOHTA is currently exploring options to engage the public in its operations, including the CDR process. CCOHTA and CDR stakeholders will be kept informed of progress on this initiative.

Recommendation #4

The CDR Evaluation recommends the Common Drug Review explore different approaches for undertaking reviews. Reviews of simpler products/submissions should be less time and labour intensive than more complex submissions.

CDR Response

When CDR began to review new drugs, it was important to develop a consistent approach for all drugs under review. With experience, it should be possible to apply an approach to the review that takes into account the complexity of the drug submission. For example, a submission for a combination of drugs already on the Canadian market may be less complex than that for a novel new drug. The CDR clinical and economic templates and the CDR procedures and submission requirements are reviewed and revised by CDR on an on-going basis and opportunities to simplify the review process for less complex products will be considered.