

**SOS Rx**  
**Senior Outpatient Medication Safety**  
**Full Coalition Meeting, April 5, 2006**  
**Meeting Report**

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The tenth full coalition meeting of SOS Rx was held on April 5, 2006, and included more than 35 participants. The meeting was held in the George Meany Conference Room at the AFL-CIO Building in Washington, DC. All meeting documents, including the agenda and list of attendees, are now available at [www.sosrx.org](http://www.sosrx.org).

**Presentation**

Michael Cohen, Director, President, Institute for Save Medication Practices talked to the group about the Institute's work on providing accurate medication safety information and improving the medication use process. A question-and-answer session followed Mr. Cohen's comments. Highlights from his presentation and the discussion are listed below.

- ISMP has been an independent non-profit agency since 1994. Receives information on medication safety issues from the FDA, USP and other sources.
- Produces four publications on safe medication use – for consumers, hospitals, and other health care professionals.
- Consumers should know key information about medications (name, reason for taking, when and how often to take) to help prevent errors.
- Medication samples present safety problems.
- Failure by health care professionals to adequately educate patients contributes to medication safety problems.
- There are some current attempts to standardize this material for patients, such as the Medication Guide.

**Discussion of Action Agenda**

Each workgroup representing the four action agenda projects gave a progress report. After each presentation there were questions and discussion. Set forth below is a summary of each action agenda project and the discussions.

**1. Oral Anticoagulant Education Campaign - Targeting high-risk situations - Jill Pierce, American Medical Women's Association Foundation**

*Project Summary:*

*This education campaign target patients taking oral anticoagulants in the outpatient setting, as well as those who prescribe and dispense these medications. The campaign will produce tools and messages designed to encourage safe use of these medications. Campaign messages will, at a minimum, inform patients that other medications and substances they may be taking (prescription medications, OTCs, dietary supplements, herbals), as well as some foods, could interact with the prescribed medication. The campaign will also target providers and dispensers to 1) reaffirm the importance of interaction messages to patients and 2) provide them with*

*techniques that can be used to enhance awareness and message compliance among their patients.*

The progress report included a review of the research conducted to date, review of the education messages, and an outline of the media launch components. The media launch is scheduled for the end of May (National Stroke Month). The education messages highlight the following areas for patients - 1) Blood testing, including the importance of blood tests, patients' knowledge of their INR number, and implementation of a regular feedback loop for communicating to patients; 2) Drug interactions – Patients need reminding that OTC drugs, other prescription drugs, and dietary supplements may cause harmful interaction with their oral anticoagulant; 3) Diet – Patients need education on appropriate diet and the importance of following a consistent diet.

The group also reviewed an outline of the media launch components. The launch will include:

- Press conference (phone briefing) which will announce the survey and new Web site;
- Press release distributed to members of the national health media;
- Educational messages for patients and health care professionals, which will also be available on the Web site and disseminated by SOS Rx partners;
- Web site – a new site for patients, health care professionals, care givers and media;
- Radio tour – NCL will participate in a series of national and regional radio network interviews to promote the new Web site.

The following issues were discussed: Spanish translation of the educational messages; targeting health care professionals, evaluating the impact of the education messages and intervention; collaborating with hospital stroke programs. The coalition voted to call the new Website “mybloodthinner.org.”

#### **Next steps-**

- 1) Launch of the campaign at the end of May, including development of the Web site.
- 2) Pursue options for pilot project – convene group to focus on this issue after the launch.
- 3) Continue to encourage dissemination of educational messages by SOS Rx partners after the launch.

## **2. Promoting Electronic Prescribing - Will Lang, American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy**

### *Project Summary:*

*To accelerate the use of E-prescribing the project will 1) adopt guiding principles that define and encourage a patient role, 2) promote various ongoing initiatives supportive of those principles, 3) launch a public awareness campaign to educate patients about the potential benefits of E-prescribing. The full coalition will then approve and coordinate a media campaign to educate patients about the benefits of E-prescribing and their role as health care consumers in advancing its use.*

Will Lang updated the coalition on the purpose of this project and recent activities. While it is a dynamic time for electronic prescribing, it is unclear what the role of SOS Rx should be in promoting consumer involvement. There was some discussion on consumers' role in promoting legible prescribing by health care professionals. The future

of the E-prescribing project will be one topic of discussion at an SOS Rx “priorities meeting” planned for late summer or early fall. This meeting will focus on the future direction for SOS Rx.

***Next Steps:***

- 1) Continue involvement in ongoing health IT meetings and initiatives
- 2) Evaluation of the E-prescribing project at upcoming SOS Rx priorities meeting

**3. Clearinghouse of Safe Practices on High-Risk Situations – Lou Diamond, Medstat**

***Project Summary:***

*This project will promote the development of a clearinghouse of safe practices for high-risk situations in the outpatient medication arena. The clearinghouse will be a comprehensive dynamic resource to which healthcare professionals can turn for guidance on safe practices to be followed when prescribing certain medications. The clearinghouse will also contain links to similar activities and programs, and consumer-friendly versions of the safe practices. SOS Rx is currently seeking a partner organization with the capacity to help develop and house the clearinghouse.*

While various organizations have been contacted about partnering with SOS Rx to develop the clearinghouse, there has not been any progress on actually establishing the clearinghouse. There are only a few viable groups that would have the capacity to develop/house the clearinghouse, as the partner must have credibility, management skills and content expertise. Recent discussions with CMS regarding the clearinghouse encouraged development of a brief concept paper on the clearinghouse that can be used to promote the idea at CMS.

The coalition discussed the following issues regarding the clearinghouse:

- Is the clearinghouse idea still relevant or is there already something else out there?
- CMS should be interested in the program with the Part D benefit;
- A pharmaceutical company, or a foundation of several companies, could possibly fund this project;
- Do we have information on the people who would use the clearinghouse?
- Level of evidence to be used in the clearinghouse is the best evidence available on safe practices;
- Scope of the clearinghouse will start with a few drugs, and then roll out to increase scope with a focus on the elderly;
- Safe practices on interactions will be included;
- Consider approaching Google Health about the clearinghouse project.

**Next Steps:**

- 1) Develop brief concept paper on the clearinghouse
- 2) Circulate paper to CMS and other interested organizations

#### **4. Personal Medication Record – Andy Barbash**

##### *Project Summary:*

*With a personal medication record a patient is able to keep track of all medications (Rx, OTCs) as well as vitamins and herbal supplements he or she may be taking, regardless of the prescriber of the medications. While there are various initiatives ongoing, standards and uniformity are needed to ensure that such records are consumer-friendly, useful and easily incorporated into the health care experience. After reviewing an inventory of some of the current initiatives on personal medication records, an expert panel met in June 2004 to determine what information is critical to include in a PMR. A model PMR has been developed based on the panel's findings. The coalition will promote the use and adoption of the model PMR by all stakeholders, including consumers. A public education campaign will encourage consumers to use personal medication records.*

The progress report noted that AARP continues to use the SOS Rx PMR as part of its online web course on wise medication use, and other organizations continue to show interest in the PMR. We are currently collaborating with FDA, AHRQ and ASHP on development of a PMR as well as other medication use issues. PhRMA is also interested in disseminating the PMR to those who visit their website for assistance in purchasing medications. We would also like to explore testing of the PMR – focus groups or some type of evaluation with consumers for both the broad campaign messages and proposed templates. These research efforts are dependent on funding.

Effie Brickman, Massachusetts Coalition for the Prevention of Medical Errors, presented information from pilot studies they have conducted on their PMR. This PMR was developed before the SOS Rx PMR was developed. The SOS Rx PMR contains many of the same data elements. The key difference is that the SOS Rx PMR instructs the patient to list all prescription drugs, along with OTC and dietary supplements, whereas the Massachusetts Coalition PMR instructs the patient to list only prescription drugs, and has a separate check off for OTC and dietary supplements.

##### *Next Steps:*

- 1) Continue outreach to integrate PMR with other efforts, collaborative opportunities
- 2) Explore pilot-test possibilities
- 3) Obtain funding for dissemination and further consumer testing (particularly focus groups) of PMR templates

##### **Other:**

- There will be a SOS Rx priorities meeting late summer or early fall to discuss the future of SOS Rx
- Members may access the members-only section of the SOS Rx Website ([www.sosrx.org](http://www.sosrx.org)) by using the following. User name: *coalition* Password: *seniorsafety04*
- The tentative date for the next full meeting of the coalition is Wednesday, September 13, 2006, from 10 am–2 pm (EST) at the AFL-CIO Building, 815 16<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., Washington, DC.