

HEALTHCARE PURCHASING NEWS

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Healthcare product recalls up six percent in first quarter of 2008, reports Noblis Center for Health Innovation

The number of product recalls and safety alerts that impact hospitals and healthcare systems in the U.S. continues to rise, according to the Noblis Center for Health Innovation, an advisory group to health providers. Noblis' National RASMAS Center, a group of expert clinicians who locate, assess, standardize, categorize, and disseminate product safety alerts, announced that safety alerts have risen six percent in Q1 2008 compared to the same period in 2007, specifically: Surgical equipment and supply alerts grew by 27 percent; Pharmaceutical alerts increased by 33 percent; Children's consumer product recalls grew a dramatic 58 percent.

"Based on first quarter results and RASMAS historical data, we project continued growth in product recalls and safety alerts this year," said Mark Lay, RASMAS Program Director at the Noblis Center for Health Innovation. "This increase will have a significant impact on healthcare organizations that are already flooded with thousands of alerts each year."

The most significant recall for healthcare providers in the first quarter of 2008 was for heparin. The heparin recall highlights the tremendous impact a recall has on every dimension of a healthcare delivery system including the patient and their families. Hospitals and health systems must begin to address product recalls in a more timely and efficient manner in order to ensure patient safety and minimize the financial impact on the organization.

The National RASMAS Center is known for its web-based service which provides centralized disposition for alerts spanning all products used in the healthcare environment. RASMAS enables organizations to respond to recalls with dramatically improved speed, thus lowering administrative costs, mitigating legal exposure and, most importantly, potentially saving lives. Currently used in more than 500 healthcare facilities in the U.S. and Canada, RASMAS has reduced alert processing time by up to 80 percent in these facilities.

The National RASMAS Center has one of the most extensive alert databases in the country, including more than 13,000 released alerts since 2003. In 2007, more than 3,173 alerts were released to health organizations, a 40 percent increase from 2006, which can be attributed in part to the significant number of children's toys recalled last year. Other recalls that made an impact include widely-used healthcare products such as defibrillators, IV pumps, and blood glucose meters. For more information see <http://rasmus.noblis.org>