

**Sent:** Sunday, November 29, 2009 5:40 PM

**Subject:** drug samples-a pharmacist's perspective

Ms. Morgan,

If it's not too late to comment on the issue of banning samples...

My experience as a former sales representative proved to me that samples do drive sales for a particular product. However, insurance and OVHA formularies (which cover 95% of all rx sales) have proven to be an effective means of promoting generic alternative therapy. The advent of many new generics means that **nearly 75% of all prescriptions are dispensed with a cost saving generic**. Additionally many popular medications have come off patent this year and the savings will be realized in 2010.

**The real issue seems to be the cost of the brand names drugs.** Manufacturers have raised the prices of the top 200 drugs nearly 40% over the last 5 years and that has created the dialogue about samples. The focus therefore should be about legislative means to lower the cost of brand name drugs. Formularies and generic alternatives have proven effective thus far for both private insurance and Vermont Medicaid.

Banning samples will not benefit patients in Vermont.

Sincerely,

Marty Irons, RPh, CDE  
President, Vermont Pharmacists Association  
Fair Haven, VT