tabs of pills

SIRUM

2014 Nominet Trust 100 Winner

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2014

CONNECTING UNOPENED, UNEXPIRED MEDICATIONS WITH PATIENTS

Project URL: sirum.org
Project Twitter: @sirum

- Economic Empowerment
- Environment & Sustainability
- Health
- Data
- Physical Computing

SIRUM is a conduit for manufacturers, wholesalers, hospitals, nursing homes and pharmacies to donate unused medicines to clinics serving the 50m American patients who otherwise would not be able to afford them.

The platform, started in 2011 by three graduate students at Stanford, has already redistributed $3m in prescription medications to clinics serving the most disadvantaged patients in 87 cities. Recycling surplus medications is an area that was ripe for supply-chain innovation: up to $9bn, and 7,000 tonnes of medications are flushed down loos, dumped in landfills or burned in incinerators each year, costing up to $3 a pound to destroy.

Other existing models foe redistributing surplus medicines tend to be costly and inefficient, meaning that many medicines, donated because they are close to their expiry date, expire in transit or while still in warehouses. Clinics are left to expend taxpayer funds, footing the bill for patient medications themselves, or go through the lengthy process of submitting requests for donations to specific manufacturers or facilities, in a process that is slow, unpredictable and piecemeal. Many patients simply go without the medications they need, which can ultimately send them to emergency rooms where they cost taxpayers much more money.

SIRUM (Supporting Initiatives to Redistribute Unused Medicine) quickly aggregates and matches hundreds of donors with recipients in real-time, and facilitates medications' door-to-door shipment, so the process becomes safe, quick and easy. Donating organisations' staff time is freed up and their

destruction costs cut, and they get quarterly reports to vouch for their contribution to sustainable health practice, while clinics receive the monitored and maintained safe medicines they need, quickly. The lessening of hazardous waste helps the environment too.

Co-founder and Stanford industrial engineering masters degree student Adam Kircher came up with the idea for the project. He had analysed the woeful logistics problems that beleaguered emergency medical relief programmes, and stopped thousands of Indonesians from receiving desperately needed medicines in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami.

Image courtesy of SIRUM

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