

# Moving medicine behind counter might prevent theft, pharmacist

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"This may be a problem in some areas, but we know our patients and they're only using these for relief for colds," said Rosa Lacaria of A. W. Pharmacy in Richmond Hill. "It's the

same as picking up Tylenol for pain; it's easy access. But if the (Ontario College of Pharmacists) said so, we'd make it harder to get them."

Moving the medications behind the counter might help prevent theft, said Lisa Levine of Panacea Pharmacy in Vaughan.

"That would prevent people from stealing six to eight bottles at a time, but that isn't a concern in this neighbourhood," Ms Levine said. "If it comes from the college or the federal regulators, we'll go ahead and do it, but I don't think making them prescription drugs is necessary."

Imram Saduk, manager of a Shoppers Drug Mart outlet in Newmarket, agreed.

"I don't think there would be any problem moving them closer to the prescription counter, where we can more closely monitor who's buying it and make sure no one is buying it in

large quantities," Mr. Saduk said. "In most cases, people who buy it come to us for advice anyway; we're already monitoring who's using it."

A first step might lie in banning the sale of cold medicines to youngsters, Newmarket resident Kathleen McDowell said.



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## 'We're trying to get away from negative image'

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Some of them advertise during pot friendly radio shows and, although they won't admit to police or the press, many of them will tell trusted customers all they need to know about growing weed indoors, Det. Cardwell said.

"Who is going to purchase all that expensive equipment just to grow tomatoes?" he said.

"It just doesn't make sense. The tomatoes aren't worth the cost of electricity to run those lights. We know what they're up to."

Hydroponics is actually a soil-free system using nutrients and water to grow plants under lights indoors. While most marijuana grow operations use the same lighting systems, they use soil, not hydroponics.

Markham Hydroponics won't serve customers who admit they want to set up an illegal marijuana grow, Ms Herbert said. But employees don't pry into their customers private business, either.

"We don't ask them what they are going to grow," Ms Herbert said. "It's not our business. If they say they want to grow marijuana, we won't give them the advice they need, but I think most large-scale grow operations are buying wholesale, not through stores like us."

The Home Depot sells high powered full spectrum lights, soil and a lot of the products marijuana growers need.

### WON'T TRACK CUSTOMERS

But they will not track purchases or inform police if they suspect someone is growing pot.

"If we are asked by police to co-operate with an investigation, we will," public relations manager Nick Cowling said. "Tracking fertilizer and light purchases and giving that information to police has some serious privacy issue implications. Also, we're not here to judge what people are doing with our products."

There are some hydroponics suppliers who do appeal to pot growers, Ms Herbert admits, but not Markham Hydroponics, which looks like a typical garden supply shop.

It doesn't sell marijuana seeds and has no hidden agenda, Ms Herbert said.

"We're trying to get away from that negative image," she said. "It gives us a dirty name."

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