

## The Safe Drug Use in Ban Ton Liap Community Project

The Safe Drug Use Project in Ban Ton Liap Community by Asst. Prof. Dr. Siranee Yongpradem from School of Pharmacy, Walailak University, was organized in collaboration with the health officers of Ban Ton Liap Subdistrict Health Promotion Hospital, village health volunteers in the community, and the 5th-year pharmacy students of Walailak University. It was implemented during the fiscal year 2024. The objective of the project was to enable Ban Ton Liap community, which is a local community, to use drugs and other health products correctly and safely. The project involved both supporting knowledge to grocery stores' owners and enhancing the potential of consumers in the 3 groups of the community (local communities/disadvantaged people/migrants), to make them develop the awareness of safe drugs and health products use, creating the potential to protect themselves, and improving their health and well-being at last. The details of the activities were:

1. Survey of incidence of selling danger drugs in grocery stores in the community, and talking with grocery stores' owners to review the knowledge about "safe drugs and health products in grocery stores". In the last year, we have already done the activity about giving information to the grocery stores' owners, so this year we reviewed these information for them again and added on the advice about drugs that illegal to be sold in the grocery stores according to the Drug Act. From this activity, it was found that the level of correct knowledge of grocery stores' owners about illegal drugs was increased to 98%. The survey of the situation found that the number of grocery stores selling illegal drugs has decreased from 10 stores last year to only 8 stores in this year (from all 39 grocery stores in the community). The grocery stores' owners also reflected the problem that there were still requests for dangerous drugs from the people in the community, especially laborers or people who do not want to waste time seeking services from public health services. We should continue to provide correct knowledge to consumers about the dangers of using drugs incorrectly, and also increase legal punishment against grocery stores' owners who still sell dangerous drugs to consumers. In addition, the public health services should be a first place for people who need to use drugs at any time.

2. Consumer empowerment activity which provided knowledge about the correct and safe selection of drugs and health products, together with laws and regulations related to the distribution of various types of drugs. This activity was done with the 3 groups of people in the community, the older patients and also their caregivers, the migrant labors, and other people in Ban Ton Liap community who interested in their self-care. The activity with 68 participants was organized in both lecture and small group discussion conducted by pharmacy students. From the post-test after the activity, it was found that 100% of the participants could answer questions about the correct selection of drugs in the grocery store. The average satisfaction score for this activity was 87.92%.

From those activities, it could be concluded that the implementation of both knowledge provision and monitoring of grocery stores' owners who sell drugs improperly, and capacity

building by providing knowledge to people who use drugs, lead to the more proper use of drugs, which affects the health and well-being of the people in the community. However, drug use behavior is affected from many factors, such as the readiness of the public health service system, punishments for offenders according to the law that are not effective in practice, and social and economic factors of the people. Continuous doing of activities to enhance all parties in awareness of the dangers of using drugs is necessary.