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A Thai hospital uses direct mail as a social innovation channel that redistributes surplus medication to patients in need.

Each year, over 67,000 patients in Thailand's border areas seek free medical treatment from state-owned hospitals, which often lack even basic medication like painkillers. Asking donors to fund the drugs would be one solution – but not necessarily sustainable.

Noticing that city dwellers often had leftover medication, Thailand's Umphang Hospital wondered if those surplus meds could be redirected to patients who were unable to afford them. But, how were they to bring together the unused drugs and the people who would benefit from them? A solution was needed to redirect free medicines from as many donors as possible.

Targeting patients through urban hospitals and pharmacies in Bangkok, the Cure Pack invited them to pass on their unused pharmaceuticals to less fortunate patients. What if the bag pharmacies traditionally used to dispense medication doubled as an envelope, which could be mailed back to Umphang Hospital – a place where medical staff could sort through the pills and treatments, keeping those that could still be used?

Over 100,000 packages of the Cure Pack were produced at an average cost of only 7¢ per patient. The medicine sent back through the mail was priceless, and has helped over 25,000 people requiring medication.

The aim of this campaign wasn't only to educate, but to empower action. By turning a bag into an envelope, Umphang Hospital has reduced pharmaceutical wastage and helped thousands of patients who can't help themselves. Just what the doctor ordered!



CLIENT: Umphang Hospital Foundation | PRODUCT: Cure Pack | COUNTRY: Thailand | AGENCY: Leo Burnett Group | AGENCY TEAM: Chief Creative Officer Sompat Trisadikun | Executive Creative Director Chanyutt Boonyagate | Creative Group Head Sakon Khanawuthikarn | Art Directors Sakon Khanawuthikarn, Sompat Trisadikun | Copywriter Jakkaphong Kirdtongkum | Group Account Director Thanyaporn Teeraprapha | Account Director Panjaporn Krupanichwong | Editors Thawisawakorn Seangkharat, Thanakorn Leeramass

