

Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023

Submission No: 125
Submitted by: The Infinity Group
Publication:
Attachments: No attachment
Submitter Comments:

Committee Secretary
Economics and Governance Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

17/01/2024

Via: EGC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Committee inquiry into the Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023

As a pharmacy owner in Queensland, I still have the following concerns despite repeated feedback and amendments and encourage further consideration by the committee. This important piece of legislation should strengthen the integrity and transparency of the profession, ensuring safe, affordable, and accessible healthcare for all Queenslanders.

As it stands, the Bill's definition of material interest in a pharmacy business fails to sufficiently address the loopholes that have been exploited in the ownership of such businesses. To rectify this, the following amendments to Clause 13 are proposed:

- Any other interest, **legal** or **beneficial** in the business, other than an interest of an owner of the business
- To remove any doubt, an interest includes, but is not limited to, having a right to receive consideration, either directly or indirectly, that varies according to the profits or takings of the pharmacy business

While I acknowledge that the Pharmacy Business Ownership Act needs to be updated and modernised to include a Pharmacy Council, it shouldn't be at the expense of modifying its key foundations being:

- Only a pharmacist can own a community pharmacy business
- The number of community pharmacies owned by a pharmacist capped at five and
- Prohibition on the right of another person to control a community pharmacy

The current version of the Bill does not accurately represent the core pharmacy services offered by my pharmacy to the patients and the community. It is regrettable that the government still perceives our primary role as merely compounding and dispensing. The definition should encompass (but not be limited to):

- Vaccinations – over the last few years has become a large part of the services we provide
- Dose Administration Aids
- Prescribing of medicines – as seen in the Urinary Tract Infection pilot program that was legislated for permanent practice and for the upcoming prescribing trials in Far North Queensland
- Provision of other clinical services

The current definition in the Bill refers to a supermarket as a 'premises' which suggests that it can only exist in a physical location. As there has been a shift in technology its meant that supermarkets can now exist as purely online businesses using fulfilment centres. The definition in the bill needs to be amended

to include both a premises location and online stores used primarily for the purchase of food, beverages and other grocery or household items.

I find it crucial for regulatory bodies to consider the feedback and input from those who stand to be negatively impacted by this Bill – namely, pharmacists, our businesses, and the patients we serve daily. By addressing these concerns, the committee can strive towards reforms that close loopholes and restore integrity to the community pharmacy sector in Queensland.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback at this time.

Regards,

Shu-Ying Chang

