

Pharmacy

From: Glenda Abbott [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 20 June 2018 4:59 PM
To: Pharmacy
Subject: Submission HCDSDFVPC re Inquiry into establishment of a pharmacy council
Categories: Submission

To whom it may concern, Committee Members,

As a pharmacist who has been practicing for over thirty years, I feel duty-bound to make a submission to this committee on behalf of my fellow professional colleagues. I have practised in both hospital and community settings and most recently with Home Medicines Reviews.

Over the last ten to fifteen years I have been disappointed at the commercialism of my profession and the obvious support of this trend by the federal government: As an example the liaison with Chemist Warehouse that brought about the \$1 discount on the government standardised patient contribution fee for concessional prescriptions. This was an obvious manoeuvre by a large corporation to increase their trade at the expense of the general public. The benefit to the government was a larger number of scripts required to reach the safety net and an obvious saving to the public purse. For the regular elderly patient who has contributed for years to the taxation system, this was in my opinion a nasty trick. As for the small retail pharmacy, how could they be expected to fund such a discount. It would mean a reduction in staff and a subsequent reduction in service upon which these small community pharmacies take an enormous amount of pride.

I feel very strongly that the current ownership laws are allowing corporations to "own" a large number of discount pharmacies with the sole focus of that board being profit, not community health care service. They are able to discount both prescriptions and retail stock based on advertising deals with large companies, a system not available on such a level to the small pharmacy premises.

The pharmacy "owner" must be able to demonstrate an awareness that the pharmacy business is being conducted in accordance with the standards, laws and protocols which are in place to protect the patient. I believe these professional obligations are not met by these discounter "ownership" board of directors with some members not being pharmacists and thus having minimal comprehension of the significance of these regulations.

In my years of experience I have noted a huge shift in the way medical centres practiced with the advent of ownership changes in that setting. The focus clearly became profit oriented with a noticeable decline in patient care. I can provide if required examples of exceedingly poor prescribing that occurred due to time limitations on the GP or expected patient quotas.

I believe it would be of great detriment to my profession and to the local pharmacies that tend to patient needs if any further relaxation of the current laws were to occur. In fact I would prefer they be tightened. The regulatory protocols for practice are not met in the large discount pharmacies as the owner corporation I believe are only focused on profit and not patient outcomes. The community pharmacy provides free advice and professionally based diagnosis and referral for patients and gives a committed pharmacist the appropriate environment to practice accordingly. In my years of service I have prevented medication misadventures, improved prescribing through networking with GP's and provided support and counselling for patients in all situations. The discount pharmacy situation is not conducive to this kind of appropriate pharmacy practice.

Furthermore the blatant ignorance of the rules regarding approval to dispense where approved pharmacies are fraudulently claiming PBS benefits on behalf of pharmacies that are trading without PBS approval causes me great concern. The rules are in place to provide safe and accurate dispensing to ensure optimum patient care, yet these pharmacies appear to be able to trade without any consequences.

I urge this committee to place at the forefront of their investigations and discussions, the appropriate regulations that will provide and ensure best pharmacy practice based on patient care, not on retail profit. The traditional pharmacy has always been a vital cog in the wheel of community health and the recent focus on money making by the larger corporations has belittled my profession and caused a shift away from proper pharmacy practice.

Kind regards.

Kind Regards,

Glenda Abbott

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