

Form Submission TYPE 1

Committee Secretary HCDSDFVPC
Parliament House George Street Brisbane Qld 4000

RE: Inquiry into the establishment of a pharmacy council and transfer of pharmacy ownership in Queensland

I have been made aware of the abovementioned inquiry, and I am writing to submit my views on issues within the terms of reference of this inquiry.

As a patient who is supported by our local community pharmacy, I am concerned about the possibility of a big business takeover of community pharmacies in Queensland.

I have seen the important contribution that pharmacists make to their local communities, and believe that any deregulation of the laws around the ownership of these pharmacies could cause these pharmacies to be bought out, or simply forced to shut their doors. I would prefer the current system where

the pharmacy owner has health outcomes as their business priority backed by their professional ethics and priorities. Big business would have as a focus shareholders and bottom line profit.

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) is too important a piece of public health policy to place in the hands of corporates.

I understand that if pharmacy ownership laws were changed many unintended consequences would result. Deregulation would bring many unintended consequences and scenarios that create moral hazard. Everyone acknowledges that supermarkets, with their selling of cigarettes and alcohol should automatically rule them out of owning pharmacies. Doctor and medical corporates should also not be allowed to own pharmacies and thus profit from the more medicines they prescribe. Equally drug manufacturers should not own pharmacies. The list goes on and on and unintended consequences would result.

Pharmacies in Queensland are the most frequently visited and accessible primary healthcare destination in the State, with more than 70 million individual patient visits annually. In our community pharmacy, the Pharmacist is extremely accessible, usually without an appointment, and primarily advice is provided without charge. Living in a Rural and remote area, we often rely on the Pharmacy for medical advice and as a primary healthcare source.

Communities rely on the health services provided by community pharmacies. Our local pharmacy provides many health services such as Diabetes screening, blood pressure checks, vaccinations, medication checks with a pharmacist, delivery of medication to our door to name but a few.

I believe that deregulation will threaten the jobs of these healthcare providers and increase the healthcare burden on GPs and the hospital system.

While I understand there are other matters before the inquiry, our main concern is ensuring

that community pharmacies continue to be able to support their communities.

I request that the committee consider the important role of pharmacies and recommend against deregulation.

Kind Regards,