

From: [Joshua Thorburn](#)
To: [Pharmacy](#)
Subject: Pharmacy in Australia compared to the USA
Date: Tuesday, 10 July 2018 3:51:34 PM

To whom this may concern,

I recently came across this inquiry and one of the point of discussion is pharmacy ownership. I was incredibly startled to hear that the legislation regarding pharmacy ownership may be under review.

I grew up in Queensland in a rural town of 1000 people. The town did not have a pharmacy until the mid 90's. When the pharmacy opened, it became the center of healthcare for the townsfolk.

I completed my Bachelor of Pharmacy in Townsville, then worked in rural Queensland for 6 years including my home town then in Brisbane for another 3 years. After this time, I relocated to Los Angeles to pursue a different life, but still as a pharmacist. I proudly work for an independent community pharmacy.

The ownership regulations and the pharmacy industry is very different in the US compared to Australia.... and let me tell you, after working in the US or 6 year, I can certainly tell you that the general public benefit from the current pharmacy model in Australia.

These two examples highlight two differences.

Patient point of contact in the health care setting:

Australia - Patient's with minor ailments approach their pharmacist for advice. Often, these minor ailments can be treated with OTC medications, or not medication at all and alleviates pressure on the current medical system.

USA - Patient's with minor ailments go immediately to urgent care or to the ER costing thousands of dollars to the health care system. A full generation of Americans have grown up not knowing what community pharmacy is. Not knowing that a pharmacist gives advice. Why? Because the pharmacy model is made up of a market which is dominated by privately owned major players where the bottom line is all that matters.

Pharmacy location:

Australia - Existing regulation ensures that the public have access to a pharmacy in a "spread out" manner.

USA - You may have a handful of pharmacies within 1-2 blocks then not a single pharmacy for a few kilometers. In the US it is all about business and what will achieve the biggest return. This is particularly important in rural and remote areas as pharmacies ARE a service industry and often larger corporations do not operate in these area because their model of business is not profitable. A pharmacist owned pharmacy IS as they know what model their community needs to thrive.

Pharmacy services:

Australia - Pharmacies offer a wide range of services, some for free, some for a nominal professional service fee.

USA - Pharmacies are dispensing machines churning out prescriptions to meet targets.

Major pharmacy chains have professional services, but they are ran by centralized office, call centers and third party agents.... rarely in the pharmacy speaking with your COMMUNITY pharmacist.

These points may seem like it does not matter who owns a pharmacy, however, it does.

Pharmacists owning pharmacies know what professional standard needs to be upheld.

Pharmacists owning pharmacist know how to meet and exceed public demand.

Pharmacists owned by pharmacists ensure a safe working environment for their staff.

Pharmacists owning pharmacies have the public's best interest as a priority.

I do, however, welcome the concept of a Pharmacy Council that is separate to the Pharmacy Guild which represents pharmacy owners and the Pharmacists Society of Australia which represents pharmacists. Hopefully the Pharmacy Council can work with these two organizations to ensure the general publics interest are upheld at all time and ensure a viable pharmacy industry for generations to come.

If any of my points require clarification or further information, please do not hesitate to reply to this email or call at + [REDACTED]

Many thanks

Joshua Thorburn