

From:
To: [Pharmacy](#)
Subject: Submission regarding pharmacy ownership
Date: Wednesday, 11 July 2018 6:48:51 PM

Dear Mr Hansen

Please find attached some of my thoughts on the possibility of changes to ownership rules.

I would like to suggest that it is unwise to change a system that continues to work well. Pharmacists continue to be accessible health professionals who are available at extended times each day. A small business with pharmacist ownership ensures absolute investment by the pharmacist within the business and the service it is providing. Health is an area where people do wish to engage with someone with whom they have a relationship. The prescriptions may be a retail transaction but the engagement during the service and followup can make a massive difference to the health outcome of the patient.

You would have to assume that where there is a big company demanding a particular return on investment, that the profit would become the focus rather than the health outcome of the patient.

In the nearly 13 years at our little pharmacy I believe we make a difference. Seldom a week will go by without a patient saying "your assistance is the reason we keep coming here". Health needs opens a channel of communication - a person will come in concerned about their health or unsure how to process information they have been given and will show real relief when they experience reassurance and professional care and know they can continue to come in or phone to ask for further advice. Taking over packing of medications results in relief and gratitude for patients who struggle with medication and prescription management.

As pharmacist owners we always go out of our way for our patients. Home visits are part of our service.

Visiting if there is a recent hospital discharge or confusion or concern with medications occurs if needed. If they are unwell and cannot attend the pharmacy we will visit with their requirements. If a patient contacts their doctor to treat a recurring infection and the script is faxed to us, the patient will receive that product within hours of the request.

Ownership by a pharmacist generally will ensure many years of care of a patient - a large business employing pharmacists will likely result in more regular turnover of staff and the opportunity for history and relationships lost.

This applies both to patients as well as doctors and other allied health professionals. Relationships build up over time and ownership (and investment) by the pharmacist tends to encourage a meaningful and respectful relationship.

This respect allows improved communication and discussion when there are concerns and questions about a patient's treatment.

Several free professional services are run at no charge at our pharmacy - blood pressure monitoring, Return of unwanted medicines, COPD screening, smoking cessation advice. We are an access point for National Diabetes Supplies - and now receive \$1 per item transaction - but this still would be regarded as a service we subsidize for our patients.

Quality Use of Medicine principles encourage the use of one pharmacy for all medicine supplies for a patient. This assists in continued checking for adherence, and reduces the risk of medication error. Patients are more likely to be loyal to their small pharmacist owned pharmacy - they understand their loyalty is the reason we survive. People are price conscious and we have lost a large amount of retail sales to supermarkets and big box Pharmacy. We are aware our customers often buy some of their supplies elsewhere because of price point, but come to us every month without fail for prescription items. (We have occasionally had people present with products purchased elsewhere and come to use for information !!). Another comment has been - we have bought 2 treatments from Woolies - neither worked so we thought we would come to you!

Every Xmas our patients arrive with cards and treats for Xmas - Apart from the couple of kilos or weight that adds to my frame, I believe they are saying - we are glad you are here and appreciate your care.

Our pharmacy supports a yearly Golf Tournament. We also visit Independent Living units and provide services when required. I talk at community groups on request. All this is done as we feel we belong to the community and want to be involved in our community and patient care.

I often visit a lovely couple struggling with health issues. They have very complicated medication regimes and I have often needed to discuss issues with their Dr. I recently received a card from the wife. It says

"My dear Glenda

You probably don't realise how precious you are to both Neil and myself. We deeply appreciate your expert care. Your knowledge I believe sometimes saves our lives. I have been so ill, thank you for caring. We put our faith in you. God bless"

I believe our relationship is valued.

Our business is funded through sales and also clinical services. I believe with pharmacist ownership rather than large corporate businesses there is less focus on profit and more focus on providing care to our patients. Ownership is a serious investment for us and that results in stability in staffing for the patients. The result is relationships that can provide more than a retail transaction. We have patients who have come to our pharmacy for 40+ years . We have a staff member who has been with us 41 years!

Pharmacists have supported PBS changes which have allowed sustainability of our wonderful health system. As owner pharmacists we have all been part of that ""tightening of belts" to assist this process. Our individually owned pharmacists already have an accreditation system in place which ensures consistent services.

I believe that changes in ownership rules allowing big organisations to take over, will put many special services we provide at risk.

Kind regards
Glenda Lord