

From:
To: [Pharmacy](#)
Subject: Public submissions
Date: Thursday, 12 July 2018 9:19:07 AM
Importance: High

Committee Secretary

HCDSDFVPC

Parliament House

George Street

Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Hansen,

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

We have been made aware of the above mentioned inquiry and write to submit our views on issues within the terms of reference of this inquiry.

As patients who are supported by our local pharmacy, we are extremely concerned about the possibility of a big business takeover of community pharmacies in Queensland. Community pharmacy is the focal point and often first point of call for basic health care needs providing free advice, referral and support services to patients. This is especially true in rural communities where the Pharmacist has become a vital link in often sparse health care services restricted by distance and availability.

Communities rely upon the comprehensive health services currently being provided by community pharmacies and any change to this present system will be detrimental especially in rural areas. Pharmacies in Queensland are the most frequently visited and accessible primary healthcare providers in the state with more than 70 million individual visits annually. There are currently 1,140 pharmacies in Queensland, employing approximately 4,500 Pharmacists. The Pharmacy Guild estimates that the sector employs approximately 12,000 Queenslanders. Closures caused by deregulation will threaten the jobs of these Queenslanders and increase the healthcare burden on GPs and the hospital system.

There are vastly more services provided by pharmacy beside medication dispensing, such as blood pressure monitoring, diabetes services, home delivery, health program promotions and numerous other professional services provided **free of charge**. We need to retain the current system where the pharmacy owner has the provision of health outcomes of their clientele as their business priority backed by their professional code of ethics and esteemed position within the community.

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) is too important a piece of public health policy to place in the hands of the corporates. Deregulation of pharmacy will result in big business dominating ownership of community pharmacies and profit and returns to shareholders becoming the primary focus. This is absolutely certain, based on overseas experience and patient care will suffer. Deregulation will result in closure of local

pharmacies especially in rural and remote areas eliminating access to the most accessible profession in the health care sector.

Ownership of pharmacies by Pharmacists is the only way to retain the ethical operation of the profession. How can it be considered that allowing supermarkets selling cigarettes and alcohol would possibly could be an ethical situation? Doctor and medical corporates should also not be allowed to own a sector where they can profit from the more medicines they prescribe. The same is true for drug companies owning pharmacies. There are many unintended consequences resulting from deregulation .

Whilst we understand that there are other matters before the inquiry, our main concern is ensuring that the status quo is maintained, allowing community pharmacy to continue to provide the ethical and professional services to the public that only Pharmacist owners can provide.

We request that the committee consider the important role of community pharmacy and recommend against deregulation.

Regards

Craig and Linda Young