



Cameron Foote
Proprietor

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Health, Community and Disability Services, Domestic and Family Violence Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

RE: Inquiry into establishing a pharmacy council and pharmacy ownership in Queensland

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing as a pharmacy owner concerned about the inquiry into pharmacy.

Our pharmacy group has 6 pharmacist partners involved in 9 practices throughout Queensland. We are primarily based in the Ipswich and West Moreton region as well as a pharmacy in the small town of Childers.

As pharmacists we are both professionally and legally responsible for the pharmacies we operate which is why we play an active role in producing the best possible health outcomes designed for our local communities. We are active members in the health care team and collaborate with other primary health care providers every day for the benefit of our patients. We are not a corporate structure and our practices reflect the level of care that the community we live and work in demands of us.

I support the government setting up a pharmacy council, to manage local pharmacy issues and bring us in line with the other states, but I'm really concerned about the potential deregulation of pharmacy ownership laws.

I believe that any deregulation of current laws of ownership threatens the existence of independent, community-based pharmacies in Queensland like my own. I believe the services that I deliver to my community would not be provided under a corporate model, which would lead to worse outcomes for patients in the Ipswich and West Moreton region. Our areas are currently well serviced with community pharmacies. The recent Health Needs Analysis by our PHN (Ipswich West Moreton and Darling Downs) showed that there were no community concerns regarding access or the services provided by community pharmacies. In contrast our local communities had significant problems accessing many in the corporatized health sector including General Practice. A copy of the Ipswich and West Moreton Darling Downs PHN Health Needs Analysis is available on the website <https://www.ddwmpnh.com.au/>

Any deregulation and subsequent corporatization of the pharmacy industry has the potential to reduce competition by allowing entities to own huge numbers of pharmacies. The duopoly within the grocery sector in Australia and the much spoken about overpricing of groceries in Australia is an example of what can happen when large entities are allowed to do as they please.

Community Pharmacy in Queensland is not broken – it is competitive and easily accessed by our community. We are well regarded and supported in the communities we represent. We offer our community many services for free which alleviate pressure on GP's and our local hospitals which are struggling to keep up. We do this because we care about Ipswich and West Moreton residents and their health journey is our primary concern as pharmacists.

We operate free screening programs for hypertension, diabetes and cholesterol. We provide free nurse- run baby clinics for new mothers. We monitor the sleeping data of clients diagnosed with sleep apnoea and make suggestions for optimal therapy at no cost. We provide free delivery services for the ill and elderly. We facilitate free language interpretation services for the many new migrants to our region. We provide subsidized drug rehabilitation services for patients addicted to opioids. These are just a few examples of the commitment we have made to our region. Any potential change to Community Pharmacy Ownership in Qld has the potential to stop these services which are a vital part of the primary health offering for our residents.

With regards to questions concerning the scope of pharmacists, I would support any extension of scope which allows me to provide the services my community needs. If I as a pharmacy professional have the knowledge or can be trained in a procedure then there is no logical reason for not investing in our sector to produce better health outcomes.

Delivering flu vaccinations through pharmacies is an excellent example of how pharmacists can improve the accessibility of important health services. We currently provide vaccination clinics in 5 of our stores via 8 clinically trained pharmacists. Before the influenza vaccination stock ran out this season we had completed over 500 vaccinations in our community. Most of these patients were either not regular recipients of vaccinations or had never had an influenza vaccination.

Pharmacies play an essential role in the health system as primary health providers. While providing PBS medicines is the core of our business, I am also proud to provide quality advice, assistance, triage and care to members of my community. Ensuring the health of my customers is part of my role as a health professional and I am concerned that a move to deregulate community pharmacy would undermine the model which serves communities like my own so well.

Regards,



Cameron Foote B Pharm FPS MACP

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