

Committee Secretary

HCDSDFVPC

By email: pharmacy@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Secretary

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

I am the owner of Riverlink Medical Centre Pharmacy.

This submission is made to the inquiry to the extent that the inquiry is considering the possible effect of relaxation of ownership laws restricting:

1. pharmacist only ownership of pharmacies; and
2. the amount of pharmacies a pharmacist can have a beneficial interest in.

I have been a registered pharmacist for 20 years.

I have practiced as a community pharmacist for 20 years. In this role I have been involved in front line delivery of allied health care to the community. My pharmacy is not only involved in the dispensing of prescription medication but also offers the following services:

1. 7 day - After hours Pharmacy open till 10pm
2. infant health care;
3. medication checks;
4. medication advice;
5. triage for medical emergencies;
6. referrals services;
7. Over the counter prescribing and advice

On a daily basis I (or one my staff) will interact with a patient, provide suitable sound medical advice. This will include treatment of minor infections, wound care, allergies just to name a few.

Regularly we will deal with serious medical emergencies. Intervening when a patient presents with symptoms we recognise as serious.

Many of the interventions and much of the advice sought from my pharmacists and staff would not be provided by a dispensary in a supermarket. Pharmacists and pharmacy assistants will be required to perform to KPIs directed to maximising profits rather than having a primary focus on the provision of health care.

The industry has become more competitive in the last 10 years. Between the advent of "big box" pharmacies and changes to the PBS many pharmacies are now struggling. If the industry was deregulated and large retailers such as Coles and Woolworths were able to compete it would inevitably lead to the closure of many small community pharmacies.

It is unlikely that there would be any saving to the government. The same amount of scripts would be written, the same amount of scripts would be dispensed. The subsidies from PBS would just be paid to larger corporations whose aim is maximisation of profit, not the delivery of health care.

Yours faithfully

Tony Norton