

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 Brassall 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 12 years.

I have practiced as a community pharmacist for 12 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. vaccinations;
2. infant and child health care;
3. medication checks;
4. medication management services;
5. non-traditional medication advice;
6. triage for medical emergencies;
7. referrals services;
8. home delivery of medication;

On a daily basis I (or one my 15 staff) will interact with a patient, provide suitable sound medical advice advertising the need for a GP visit. This will include treatment of minor infections, wound care, allergies just to name a few.

Less frequently, but still regularly, we will deal with serious medical emergencies. Intervening when a patient presents with symptoms we recognise as serious.

In one instance which happens more frequently than one would think is a patient presents felling generally unwell. Due to the gentlemen's visible appearance and information collected by one of our pharmacy assistants the patient is immediately referred onto a pharmacist. As a trained and experience pharmacist we collect more information (current medication, symptoms, how long has it been going on, what has he taken, has he seen his doctor, etc.) from the patient to ascertain what may be happening. On this occasion we decided to take the gentlemen's blood pressure to identify he was on the verge of having a cardiovascular event and immediately call for an ambulance. Needless to say, the proactive nature of our response may have prevented a major event or even death.

Another valuable service we provide to our customers is a medication management service, where their medications are packed into a weekly blister pack and delivered to them for free. Due to the aging population and their inability to make into the pharmacy this has become one of our most valued and appreciated services. However, from time to time due to the patient medical history their

medications may be changed at a moment's notice from their doctor (most likely due to test results received). For someone like me its easy for me to make my way down to the pharmacy and get my new medication filled. For our aging clients who have no transport and are frail or immobile they rely on us to organise the new medication to be packed and delivered in the same day. This is another way we support our community in providing allied healthcare whilst collaborating with other healthcare professionals.

Many of the interventions and much of the advice sought from my pharmacists and staff would not be provided by a dispensary in a super market. 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

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