



27 November, 2015

Research Director
Health and Ambulance Services Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Sir/Madam

Submission for an inquiry into the establishment of a Queensland Health Promotion Commission

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission into the establishment of a Queensland Health Promotion Commission. The Pharmacy Guild of Australia (Guild) welcomes the establishment of this Commission and the role that community pharmacy and pharmacists can play in addressing Health Promotion in Queensland.

About the Pharmacy Guild of Australia

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia is Australia's peak body representing community pharmacy. The Guild is an employers' organisation servicing the needs of the community pharmacy network as an integral part of Australia's health infrastructure, supporting the community through optimum therapeutic use of medicines, medicines management and related services. The Guild has Branches in every state and territory of Australia with the Queensland Branch currently supporting a membership base of 856 out of a total of 1055 pharmacies throughout the state.

Community Pharmacy

Community pharmacy is part of the nation's health infrastructure. The network of community pharmacies is a privately owned asset essential to the government to distribute medicines, as well as professional advice and a range of health care services to the community. Independent community pharmacies invest substantial resources into the establishment and maintenance of the infrastructure and other resources necessary to provide this service to the Australian community as part of a partnership with government.

With nearly 350 million individual pharmacy visits a year, pharmacists are often the first point of contact for people seeking to access the health system. Community pharmacies not only dispense an estimated 270 million prescriptions a year, they are also heavily involved in health promotion, early intervention, prevention, assessment and management of health. Pharmacies deliver high levels of access, choice, competition, equity and quality for consumers. With 87 per cent of Australians living within 2.5km of at least one pharmacy, this level of access is higher than for banks and medical centres in both capital cities and regional areas.

The Pharmacy Guild approves the establishment of a Queensland Health Promotion Commission

Community pharmacies are a key source of health information and advice in public health programs. Health promotion in the context of community pharmacy refers to the delivery of strategies aimed at prevention, early detection, treatment and management of disease.

The Pharmacy Guild endeavours to expand its role in health promotion in the future, and build upon a strong foundation of successful programs and initiatives. These include public health education and awareness, referral pathways and ensuring community pharmacies are more accessible for advice and professional service delivery.

The Guild and community pharmacies recognise the important influence that social, cultural and physical environments have on health behaviours, as well as the effect of individual circumstances have on shaping personal priorities and decision-making about health and other behaviours. They also pay particular attention to groups of the population for whom mainstream programs may not be accessible, culturally relevant or appropriate.

Community pharmacy has actively implemented the *Closing the Gap* Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme arrangements since 2010, helping to deliver quality use of medicines to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. *Closing the Gap* acknowledges the importance of adopting a holistic, life stage approach to reaching its objectives. The agreement also recognises the need to work across government to address the underlying social determinants of poor health, including education, housing and employment.

The State's pharmacists play a fundamental role in the application of primary health care. They are one of the most accessible and trusted of all health care professionals and are found over an extensive network of community pharmacies. This enables equitable access for patients in all regions of Queensland and Australia (refer to Appendix A).

The Pharmacy Guild has extensive partnerships with the Queensland Government as a whole, and with industry and community stakeholders. Examples of existing and potential collaborative funding, evaluation and research, are outlined in Appendix B. What these partnerships also offer is evidence-based outpatient programs which further enhance pharmacy's role in the multidisciplinary approach to the continuum of care in the community. Aiding in the prevention of medication misadventures and possible re-hospitalisation.

Conclusion.

The Pharmacy Guild sees an opportunity for community pharmacy to play an even further role in the provision of primary and preventative care and health care promotion in Queensland. The Guild welcomes the formation of a Health Promotion Commission and looks forward to working collaboratively in the production of better health outcomes for all Queenslanders.

Submitted by:

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Queensland Branch

Appendix A: Primary Health Care Strategies provided through Community Pharmacies:

Strategy	Description
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Quality Use of Medicines (QUM) support	Delivering a range of primary health care services to support QUM for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 100 Remote Aboriginal Health Services Program (S100 RAHSP) • Section 100 Pharmacy Support Allowance Program (S100 PSAP) • Quality Use of Medicines Maximised for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (QUMAX) • Closing the Gap (CTG) PBS Co-payment Measure
Absence from Work Certificates	Pharmacist provision of absence from work certificates as proof of legitimate absence from work for federal system employees covered by the <i>Fair Work Act 2009</i> .
Asthma management support	Pharmacy services supporting risk-assessment for or patient self-management of asthma, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lung function check • Inhaler technique review • MedsCheck (with asthma focus) – medicines use review to improve understanding of and adherence to asthma medicines • HMR (with asthma focus) – providing comprehensive medication review by an accredited pharmacist with report to GP • Management triage with referral to medical support when indicated
Blood pressure monitoring	In-pharmacy blood-pressure monitoring and recording supporting patients to self-monitor blood pressure as a cardiovascular disease screening/monitoring service with referral to medical support when indicated.
Bowel cancer screening	Promotion and provision of self-test bowel cancer screening kits (separate to the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program).
Cholesterol testing	In-pharmacy cholesterol monitoring and recording supporting patient self-management of hyperlipidaemia and/or providing a cardiovascular disease screening service with referral to medical support when indicated.
Chronic Disease Screening	Screening services for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardio Vascular Disease • Diabetes Type 2 • Stroke • Mental Health • Arthritis • Osteoporosis • Respiratory Disease
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) risk-assessment and self-management support	Pharmacy services supporting risk-assessment for or patient self-management of COPD, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lung function check • Inhaler technique review • MedsCheck (with COPD focus) – medicines use review to improve understanding of and adherence to asthma medicines

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMR (with COPD focus) – providing comprehensive medication review by an accredited pharmacist with report to GP • Management triage with referral to medical support as needed
Community health education/promotion (structured)	<p>Participation in structured programs to raise consumer awareness of public health issues such as Hepatitis C or alcohol misuse.</p> <p>Activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-pharmacy promotion (e.g. window or counter displays, counter mats, pharmacy TV) • Information handouts (e.g. pamphlets, prescription repeat folders) • Pharmacy staff training – pharmacists and pharmacy assistants
Complementary health therapies	Providing professional advice and information on the safe and appropriate use of complementary medicines as part of a patient's health management plan.
Continence support	Provision of continence supplies along with information and advice to raise community awareness of continence issues and promote help-seeking strategies by consumers. Participation in the Continence Aids Payment Scheme (CAPS).
Diabetes risk assessment and self-management support (including Diabetes MedsCheck)	<p>Pharmacy services supporting risk-assessment for or patient self-management of diabetes, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calibration and check of blood glucose monitors • Point-of-care blood glucose testing • Diabetes MedsCheck – medicines use review to improve understanding of and adherence to diabetes medicines • HMR (with diabetes focus) – providing comprehensive medication review by an accredited pharmacist with report to GP • Management triage with referral to medical support when indicated
Dose Administration Aids (e.g. Blister Packs)	Compartmentalised units prepared under pharmacist supervision providing patients with their oral medicines divided into individual doses and arranged into a daily dose schedule as a means of improving patient adherence.
Health aids and equipment	<p>Sale or hire of patient health and mobility aids, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheelchairs and mobility aids • Crutches • Monitors (e.g. blood pressure monitor) • Sleep apnoea machines • Breast milk expressing pumps and equipment
Home delivery service	Providing patients with access to pharmacy products and support when patients may be incapacitated or transport arrangements may be limited.
Home Medicines Reviews (HMRs)	A comprehensive, consumer-focused, collaborative medication review conducted in the patient's home by an accredited pharmacist in response to a GP referral.
Medicine Information	<p>Provision of medicine information for prescribed, non-prescribed and complementary medicines as part of a counselling process, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer Medicines Information (CMI) • Self-care Fact Cards • Government & Professional Organisation information resources

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference to reliable websites • Medication profiles (with medicine images where available)
Mental Health Support	<p>Provision of specialised support for patients with mental health conditions, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clozapine supply and monitoring through the Highly Specialised Drugs Program • Staged Supply • Medication adherence support
Minor Ailments support	<p>Access to a pharmacist for information, advice, products and support for triaging and managing minor ailments, with referral to medical support when indicated.</p>
National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) Access Point	<p>Community pharmacy makes up 97% of all Access Points for the NDSS, providing consumers with diabetes access to subsidised diabetes products for self-management.</p>
Opioid Dependence Treatment (ODT) services	<p>Provision of buprenorphine and/or methadone as part of an ODT program to reduce the health, social and economic harm to individuals and the community from illicit opioid use. [Community pharmacy makes up 88% of all ODT dosing points]</p>
Prescription management support	<p>Provision of prescription management support to enhance therapy adherence, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • filing of prescriptions and repeats to minimise lost prescriptions • reminder alerts to have a repeat prescription filled • 'last repeat' reminders for patients to see their doctor for review and a new prescription if appropriate • home delivery service
QUM support for residential aged care facilities	<p>Supporting residential facilities with information, training and advice to promote safe and quality use of medicines within the aged care sector.</p>
Return of unwanted medicines for destruction	<p>Providing a public service for the safe return and destruction of expired and unwanted medicines.</p>
Sexual health services	<p>Provision of contraceptives and emergency contraception along with information and advice about contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and safe sex promotion with referral to medical support when indicated. Some pharmacies provide self-test screening kits for STIs such as chlamydia.</p>
Smoking cessation support	<p>The supply of products, services, information and advice to encourage and support consumers with smoking cessation.</p>
Staged Supply	<p>Dispensing medicines in instalments (e.g. daily or weekly) according to a schedule agreed by the patient, pharmacist and prescriber to manage issues of abuse, misuse or adherence.</p>
Vascular Disease Support	<p>Sale and professional fitting of compression garments for vascular disease/DVT prevention.</p>
Wound management support	<p>Provision of first-aid and wound management services along with wound management supplies, treatment and management.</p>

APPENDIX B: Current and Potential Partnering Activities with Community Pharmacies

Examples of Partnering Activity with Community Pharmacies	
Organisation/s	Partnering activity
Darling Downs – South West Queensland Medicare Local (now: Darling Downs PHN)	<p>The Darling Downs-South West Queensland Medicare Local (DDSWQML) has sought Community Pharmacy participation in their 'Closing the Gap on Indigenous Health Outcomes Community Grants Program'.</p> <p>The program aimed to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in our communities. The Guild assisted community pharmacies located in the DDSWQML region to identify and provide MedsChecks and Diabetes MedsChecks to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples via the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving cultural competence for pharmacists providing services and ensuring their awareness of disproportionate chronic disease in this patient group, • Ensuring health promotion resources were available to assist with making pharmacies culturally welcoming, • Communication to stakeholders about the benefits in health outcomes of the MedsChecks services and promote shared responsibilities.
Metro North Brisbane Medicare Local (Now: North Brisbane PHN)	<p>The Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland branch received a grant to distribute Chlamydia test kits to pharmacies located at or near to universities, high schools, major shopping centres, including linking up with school-based youth health nurses.</p> <p>This project allowed targeted interventions to groups who were more vulnerable, or are at greater risk of developing chlamydia. This may have been due to their age or circumstances and groups for whom mainstream programs may not be accessible, culturally relevant or appropriate.</p>
Partners in Recovery – North Brisbane, Gold Coast and South Brisbane locations.	<p>Partners in Recovery (PiR) is a federally funded program which aims to support people with severe and persistent mental illness with complex needs and their carers and families, by coordinating multiple sectors, services and supports they might come in contact with to work in a more collaborative, coordinated and integrated way.</p> <p>Community pharmacy collaborated with PiR to facilitate integrated systems and shared responsibilities for consumers with mental illness. The pharmacies generated a mental health friendly environment for consumers and their carers to access information and improve awareness and support.</p>

Queensland Health: Pharmacy Needle and Syringe Program (PNSP)	<p>The aim of the Queensland Pharmacy Needle and Syringe Program (PNSP) is to reduce the incidence of blood borne viruses and injecting related injuries and disease. The program supplies sterile injecting equipment to injecting drug users with the aim of ensuring users do not share needles, thus reducing the spread of blood borne viruses within the wider community. The program demonstrates the unique capability community pharmacies have to seek opportunistic discussions with consumers about chronic disease conditions and harm minimization strategies for the community.</p> <p>The PNSP is funded via Queensland Health and is administered by The Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Queensland Branch.</p>
Queensland Health, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) and PGA QLD Branch: Queensland Pharmacist Immunisation Pilot (QPIP)	<p>The Queensland Pharmacist Immunisation Pilot (QPIP) is currently in its second phase of trials, and has seen over 220 pharmacies take part. Building on the success of the first trial using Influenza vaccinations where 10,889 influenza vaccines were administered by Community Pharmacists across Queensland.</p> <p>These pharmacies are now delivering measles and whooping cough (pertussis) vaccinations.</p> <p>Harnessing the accessibility of community pharmacies across the state and the clinical skill of pharmacists, QPIP offers Queensland adults increased choice and flexibility to protect themselves and others against the above three highly contagious diseases. To date, QPIP has proven successful in capturing a cohort of the population who might not normally be vaccinated. 15% of people vaccinated during the first phase of QPIP indicated they had never been vaccinated for Influenza before, citing inconvenience or being too busy. The success of QPIP demonstrates the capacity of community pharmacy to play an expanded role in the provision of primary health care and literacy to consumers.</p>

Examples of potential strategies with partnering organisations and community pharmacy	
Organisation	Potential strategies and activity
Metro North Hospital and Health Services: LINK Funding	<p>The proposal for this project called for a pilot study in the Caboolture / Redcliffe region which involved the community pharmacies surrounding Caboolture Hospital.</p> <p>The project proposed participating pharmacies conduct a medicine use review and mental health assessment for identified patients within 7 days of discharge. The results of the medicines use review and a medication summary would be forwarded to the patient's GP on completion.</p> <p>This project highlights shared responsibilities within organisations from MNHHS, General Practitioners and</p>

	<p>Community Pharmacies. The project allowed for targeted interventions to groups who were more vulnerable, or are at greater risk of being readmitted to hospital. Education and promotion of management and treatment of chronic disease could be facilitated through discussions with consumers following discharge.</p>
<p>Project Stop: application to other medications subject to misuse / diversion</p>	<p>Project Stop is a web-based tool which was developed by the Queensland branch of the Pharmacy Guild in consultation with the Queensland Police, for real-time tracking of pseudoephedrine sales. The activity addressed key issues of pseudoephedrine misuse prevention, intervention, research and education. All of which can be promoted through community pharmacy.</p> <p>The computerised platform currently monitors only pseudoephedrine-based products, but it does have the abilities to monitor and record the sale of many other medications, including a possible application to other drugs of misuse such as codeine.</p>