




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 13 October 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Pharmacists

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (10.26 am): Pharmacists have always been an integral part of healthcare delivery. With pressure mounting on the public health system and primary health sector, it makes sense to make better use of their expertise when it is safe and appropriate to do so. We need all of our health professionals working to their full potential and their full scope. The North Queensland Community Pharmacy Scope of Practice Pilot is designed to give patients more access to high-quality, integrated and cost-effective primary health care.

It is important that I acknowledge the advocacy of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the work that the Queensland branch of the guild has done to work with the government on developing the scope of this pilot. I also acknowledge other stakeholders' input. I want to acknowledge in the gallery today: Trent Twomey, the national president of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia; Chris Owen, president of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia Queensland branch; and the award winners of its annual awards last night, particularly those who received awards because of their incredible efforts in COVID. They actually delivered over two million vaccinations across this state and continue to do so today. I want to acknowledge that great work.

Today I can confirm that the scope of the pilot has now been finalised to confirm that pharmacists will be able to administer more types of vaccines and prescribe medicines for a range of common conditions including: nausea and vomiting, reflux, rhinitis, mild skin conditions and acute mild musculoskeletal pain. The scope of the pilot will also allow pharmacists to provide health and wellbeing services including: hormonal contraception, oral health screening, weight management and support for consumers to quit smoking. Pharmacists will also be able to prescribe as part of the structured chronic disease management programs for cardiovascular disease risk reduction, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

I can advise the House that the final scope will be published on the Queensland Health website, accessible to all Queenslanders to review. Now that the scope has been finalised, work has started on implementing appropriate structures to ensure the pilot is safe and effective.

I want to be clear: these full scope services will not immediately become available in participating community pharmacies. Pharmacists participating in the pilot will now need to undergo additional training to ensure they are able to safely manage the included conditions and responsibilities. It is anticipated that the pilot will commence in the second half of 2023, once the training is complete. Participating pharmacies must also have suitable consulting spaces that provide patient privacy. I am confident in the ability of pharmacists to manage the additional responsibilities given they are already highly trained and well regulated health professionals.

I believe this pilot will benefit health consumers in Queensland, if local and international examples are any guide. We recently implemented the urinary tract infection pilot as a permanent initiative following its successful trial, which commenced in June 2020 and saw over 8,000 women access the

service. We know the pharmacy prescribing models of care have been used effectively in other countries including the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand. The aim of this initiative is to supplement and not replace existing services and give consumers in North Queensland more access to the health care they need. It will also help ease the load on our public hospital system and the private health sector, both of which have experienced rapid growth in demand in recent years, particularly because of COVID-19.

I understand that the fulfilment of this election commitment will cause concern to some stakeholder groups. I want to assure Queenslanders that this trial has patient safety at its forefront. I look forward to monitoring the progress of the North Queensland Community Pharmacy Scope of Practice Pilot and engaging with all stakeholders, including the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, to ensure our health system is delivering results for Queenslanders. To all the pharmacists and their staff who work in community pharmacies right across Queensland, we thank them for the work they do each and every day to service their communities.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am proudly wearing a Pharmacy Guild tie today. I cannot confirm or deny that I stole it from Trent Twomey last night.

Mr Crisafulli: We'll call you the pharmacists' friend.

Mr SPEAKER: The pharmacists' friend, thank you.