



**The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia**

Tasmanian Branch

ABN: 25 957 305 960

28 February 2013

Ms Sue McLeod

Legislative Council

Parliament House

HOBART 7000

Email: sue.mcleod@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Ms McLeod,

Please find attached a Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Preventative Health Care, on behalf of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Tasmanian Branch.

Regards,

Greg Luckman

Branch Director

Tasmanian Branch

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Submission to the Parliamentary Committee – Preventative Health Care

Pharmacy Guild of Australia – Tasmanian Branch

The Tasmanian Branch of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia ("The Guild") seeks to draw the attention of the Committee to the important and often crucial role that community pharmacy plays in the Tasmanian health system.

In particular, the Guild wishes to highlight the role of pharmacy in relation to point two of the Terms of Reference of the Committee: *"The need for an integrated and collaborative preventative health care model which focuses on the prevention, early detection and early intervention for chronic disease."*

Community pharmacies have a particular role to play in all stages of preventative health and early detection due to their close and regular connection with a large proportion of the community through regular provision of medication and health care services.

In addition, in relation to point three of the Terms of Reference: *"The need for structural and economic reform that promotes the integration of a preventative approach to health and wellbeing, including the consideration of funding models."*

The Guild is of the view that any consideration of the integration of health services must reflect the central coordination role which is already undertaken by community pharmacy. Such consideration should also take account of recent expansion in medication related programs and in primary health care, as detailed below.

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About the Pharmacy Guild of Australia

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia is the national peak body representing community pharmacy. It seeks to serve the interests of its members and to support community pharmacy in its role in delivering quality health outcomes to all Australians. The Guild was established in 1928, bringing together several small retail pharmacy organisations then operating in the various States. The Guild is registered under the Fair Work Act (Registered Organisations) Act 2009 as an employers' organisation.

The Guild believes that community pharmacy is an integral part of Australia's health infrastructure, as the most accessible health service in Australia, with many community pharmacies located in areas with limited healthcare service providers and limited access to primary health care. The Guild is committed to supporting and maintaining the community pharmacy model as the most appropriate and efficient system of delivering medicines, medication management and related services to the Australian public.

The Role of Community Pharmacy in the Tasmanian Health System

Community pharmacy plays a vital role in the provision of health care services in Australia. With its network of over 5200 pharmacies in urban, regional and rural communities throughout Australia and its highly trained workforce, community pharmacy is the most accessible of all health services and is well placed to play a constructive and dynamic role in the provision of effective primary health care.

Within Tasmania, there are approximately 150 community pharmacies well distributed between urban, regional areas and more remote locations. The Pharia Index is a measure used to provide a standardised measurement of the physical and professional remoteness of pharmacies throughout Australia. The 2012 calculation of the Pharia Index shows that a third of pharmacies in Tasmania are classified as located in areas of reduced accessibility (52 pharmacies have a Pharia index of 2 or higher) and almost ten per cent of pharmacies are classified as being located in remote or very remote locations (14 pharmacies have a Pharia Index of 5 or higher).

Highly Skilled, Trusted and Accessible Services

Pharmacists are one of the most trusted health care professions in Australia and are immediately accessible without an appointment through the community pharmacy network. Community pharmacies must always have a registered pharmacist present during opening hours. In addition, regular monthly dispensing of medications means that pharmacists often have substantially more contact with patients than many prescribing practitioners. This is a key point of difference with other health professional businesses especially in rural and remote locations where other health services may be restricted to part time or episodic provision. Pharmacists are equipped to not only dispense and give advice about medicines, but also to assist in the delivery of health services in a variety of other ways. Pharmacists have completed a four year academic course with an additional supervised registration year. Their training involves more study of medicines and therapeutics than any other

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profession.

The potential of pharmacy to improve the community's access to quality health care is particularly important in rural and remote areas, where the health of people living in those communities is generally of a lesser standard than that of people living in metropolitan areas. Poor access to health services is cited as being one of the major causes of this inequality. Community pharmacists in rural/remote areas are the logical health professional to whom members of the community turn for advice in the treatment of minor illnesses and in provision of primary health care.

As health professionals, pharmacists remain a significant untapped resource for delivering accessible services to the people who need them most. The Guild is of the view that there is potential to see pharmacies expand and improve the range of clinical services they offer to people, particularly offering new services for those with minor ailments and long-term conditions, such as routine monitoring, vascular risk assessment and support for making the best use of their medicines.

Expanding the Role of Community Pharmacy

Managing the burden of chronic disease on our health system relies on medicines being taken appropriately and there is great scope in expanding the role of pharmacists to further take full advantage of scarce health care resources.

The services which have traditionally been provided by community pharmacy include clinical services in the area of medication related care such as:

- Dispensing Prescription Only medicines with appropriate counseling
- Supply of Pharmacy Only Medicines and Pharmacist Only Medicines with appropriate counseling
- Provision of advice for the management of minor ailments and overall health and wellbeing
- Provision of Dose Administration Aids to patients who require or request the service including elderly, chronically ill and disabled consumers, both in the community and residential facilities
- Ensuring the Quality Use of Medicines through advice and counseling of consumers and carers
- Provision of triage services for a range of community health concerns, frequently referring patients to GPs or other health professionals, and.
- Provision of services as part of the Closing the Gap indigenous health initiatives.

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With the specific and extensive training that pharmacists undertake in medication related care, it is entirely logical that this role should expand. In recent times the Guild has worked with the Government to encourage pharmacies to take on additional roles in primary health, public health and preventive care, as evidenced by programs in the current 5th Community Pharmacy Agreement and other funding arrangements.

The expanded services can be classified as falling into two categories: Medication Related Care Programs and Primary Health Care Programs, and include:

Medication Related Care Programs such as:

- Medication Management (including programs such as Home Medication Reviews, Residential Care Medication Management Reviews, MedsCheck and Diabetes MedsCheck)
- Dose Administration Aids
- Patient Medication Profile
- Illicit drug diversion programs such as Project Stop
- Opioid Replacement programs such as Methadone and Buprenorphine

Primary Health Care Programs, such as:

- Needle and syringe supply
- Health promotion and illness prevention
- Asthma management
- Wound management
- Diabetes management
- Continence management
- Falls prevention
- Hypertension management
- Infant care programs
- Smoking cessation
- Weight management programs

Some of these programs are privately funded, some are State funded and some are Federally funded via various departments. In order to deliver such programs, pharmacists have adapted the physical environment of their pharmacies by establishing private counseling/professional service areas to ensure privacy for the patient and pharmacist. For some of the programs, additional training and or accreditation is required to be completed before pharmacists or pharmacies are permitted to deliver the services.

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Many of these programs are evidence based, with rigorous evaluations demonstrating their value and cost effectiveness. They have clearly demonstrated the potential of community pharmacy to play a greater role in the provision of primary health care services and particularly in preventative health care. The Guild would be happy to provide any additional information on any of the programs or their potential to enhance health service delivery in Tasmania.

The Pharmacy Guild of Tasmania recommends that community pharmacy be considered a significant option for the cost effective distribution of frontline health services, particularly in the areas of collaborative preventative health care.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Luckman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Greg Luckman,

Branch Director,

On behalf of Tasmanian Branch of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia

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