

## Medicines Use Review – Council responds to sector discussion

Recently there have been rumblings in the sector about the Medicines Use Review (MUR) training course and the low numbers of pharmacists completing the course requirements. Concerns have been raised from some that the course requirements may be too demanding, the “clinical standards” required too high and the amount of paperwork lengthy and potentially unnecessary. Feedback on new processes is important to hear, and the Council would like to clarify what role it has in the MUR training and what it has been doing recently to streamline the assessment.

The role of the Pharmacy Council in MUR is standard-setting, as the Council has a statutory function to set standards of clinical competence for the profession. The Council had recognised the urgent need to satisfy the DHBs/DHBNZ and pharmacists’ wishes to have national competence standards in place for enhanced services. Therefore standards were developed in 2006 after wide consultation with the pharmacy sector including the Medicines Management working party, a multi-sector group convened by the Pharmacy Council.

Once the standards were set, the Council invited applications from education provider organisations to provide the training and assessment of pharmacists against the standards. The College of Pharmacists was the only training organisation to submit a course for accreditation. The Council provisionally approved the training course (subject to moderation), as it met the criteria of the accreditation guidelines previously agreed, and the first courses commenced in early 2007.

Moderation is required to ensure that the marking is consistent and to the set standard. This was delayed due to fewer than expected numbers of pharmacists completing the course within the stipulated timeframe.

The feedback Council has received is that the competence standards set by Council *do* reflect what is needed for MUR. However, it appears that there is room for improvement in the way these are taught and assessed. As often happens with new programmes, experience gained from the first participants is useful to improve future programmes, and the Council and College met recently to discuss streamlining the processes. Recommendations were made that should help pharmacists complete their current assessments. The Council has also asked the College to consider variations to the assessment process, and has been assured that this will happen in early 2008.

The vision of the Pharmacy Council is;

*“The Pharmacy Council helps ensure that New Zealand pharmacists perform to the highest standards to improve public well-being.”*

The new Medicines Management Competencies, beginning with MUR, are set to achieve this, and Council encourages pharmacists to become MUR accredited to achieve the best outcomes for their patients.

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**CHAIR**

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