

Newsletter December 2013

Message from the Chair

Tēnā koutou katoa

Welcome to the final newsletter of 2013. This has been an incredibly busy year for the Pharmacy Council as no doubt it has been for all of you. Council has met five times this year with the most recent meeting in late November. In addition to considering regulatory issues for individual pharmacists, we have reviewed a number of policies including recertification requirements and audit, intern pharmacist assessments, and preceptor pre-requisites. Along with other Responsible Authorities (RAs) we also carefully considered the case for forming a single shared services organisation (SSO) which was intended to be formed after January 2014.

The SSO model offered the potential to improve administration of health regulation in NZ through sharing of regulatory functions. However, following a period of consultation, not all RAs agreed on the model and it has been decided that the proposal will not proceed at this time. In order to increase efficiencies and reduce costs, the RAs will now commence work on identifying areas for shared office functions and seek other opportunities for collaboration. At the top of the list for the Pharmacy Council is the implementation of a shared IT platform and work on this will commence early in the New Year.

2014 will also see the introduction of the changes to assessments for intern pharmacists registering in the pharmacist scope of practice, and new processes for auditing practising pharmacists against the new recertification framework. In this issue we provide an update on both of these activities. For the first time, the audit of individual pharmacists to ensure they are engaged in continuing professional development will occur at the same time as APC renewal.

As we head into the final weeks of 2013, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.



Andrew Bary, Chair

APC fees and recovery of credit card transaction fee

We are pleased to advise that we have again achieved a positive financial result against budget and the annual practising certificate (APC) fee will remain at \$506.00 (inc GST) for the next year. In order to keep APC fees low, Council will be recovering the transaction fee associated with credit card transactions. For the APC year commencing 1 April 2014, payments made by credit card will incur a transaction fee of 1.85% (per transaction) and the fee will be added to your payment.

If you do not wish to pay this transaction fee, the option of paying your fee by direct credit is available. Our bank account details will be printed on your APC renewal form which will be sent to you late January. If you decide to pay by direct credit, it is essential that your application form is posted at the same time as the direct credit payment is made and that you follow the instructions for inserting references. If we do not have both payment and form at the same time, there will be a delay in processing your application and without your APC you will not be able to practise.

More information on recovery of credit card transaction fees will be available on the 'What's new' page of our website in January.

2014 recertification requirements and audit

Practising pharmacists were required to be participating in the new recertification programme from 1 April 2013 and a minimum of 20 CPD points must be achieved by 31 March 2014. In 2014 we will audit a much larger number of pharmacists and the audit will be conducted at the same time as APC renewal. The audit will primarily focus on whether pharmacists have met the requirements for the year to 31 March. Pharmacists found to be not participating, or not meeting the requirements, may have a condition proposed on their scope of practice. **Please note that all applications for APC renewal received after 31 March will automatically be included in the audit.** To read more about the recertification requirements please see this page on our website:

<http://www.pharmacycouncil.org.nz/recertification>.

Written Examination (multi-choice questions) for intern pharmacists 2014

Following consultation with the profession and stakeholders on the proposed fee for the Written Examination (WE), Council has agreed to implement the fee of \$520 per sitting. This fee will now be published in the Gazette. A pass in the WE is a pre-requisite to attending the Assessment Centre, in addition to confirmation from the preceptor that the intern pharmacist is competent to practise as a pharmacist.

The WE will be introduced for New Zealand intern pharmacists from March 2014. The first cohort sitting the exam will be a smaller group consisting of intern pharmacists who were unsuccessful in the 2013 November Assessment Centre, and overseas pharmacists who enter the Intern Training Programme in December 2013. Council is fully aware of the importance of keeping intern pharmacists well informed about the assessment changes, and they will be contacted and advised of the requirements. Focus on the calculation section and the format of the WE will be paramount in this communication. More information will also be available at the intern training days. The 2014 intake of interns will be eligible to sit the WE in July and have a further opportunity in September.

The consultation document outlining the background to the WE and the fee is available on our website: <http://www.pharmacycouncil.org.nz/consultations>

Assessment centre for intern pharmacists 2014 – update on progress

Development of the new OSCE Assessment Centre is well underway. Timelines for development of the steps have been agreed to with the programme provider, the Pharmaceutical Society of NZ, and the first Assessment Centre in the new format will be delivered in May 2014. More information and discussion on preparing for the new Assessment Centre will be available at intern training days.

Preceptor policy

The Council has recently reviewed its criteria for initial and continuing approval of preceptors.

Of note is that preceptor approval may be rescinded at any time by the Council if a pharmacist no longer meets the criteria. In such situations the Registrar will supply the Intern Training Programme provider with the relevant information. The reviewed policy is available on our website. Click on the

link [Preceptor and Site Approval](#), read the Council's Intern Training Policy and scroll to the relevant section of the policy.

Changes to the Return to Practice policy

The Council recently reviewed the Return to Practice policy and made the following amendments:

- Council confirmed that supervision of pharmacists returning to practice does not need to be direct supervision. While an initial period of close supervision is necessary, the level of supervision should be reviewed regularly.
- The Pharmacy Council has set minimum requirements for supervising pharmacists. These requirements also apply for the supervision of pharmacists from Australia, Canada, Ireland, United Kingdom and the USA and are found on our [website](#).
- Pharmacists returning to roles that do not include direct patient care are no longer required to complete a period of supervision in a hospital or community pharmacy. However, they must apply for a change to their scope of practice, which will limit their practice to their current role.

For further information please see our [website](#).

Competence standards review update

Review of the competence standards for pharmacists is well underway. Following the roadshows at the end of 2012, Council brought together a group of pharmacists from across the spectrum of pharmacy practice to provide advice and guidance into the review of both the pharmacist scope of practice and the standards. We have also contracted a quality and assurance reviewer with considerable expertise in developing professional standards to provide oversight for the project. The Q & A reviewer will ensure, among other things, that the standards reflect expectations of contemporary pharmacy practice and that they reasonably cover all aspects of the various roles pharmacists might undertake. A series of focus group meetings was held during November and our expectation is that we will have the finalised draft ready for a further series of roadshows in April/May 2014.

Advertising guidelines

Revised draft advertising guidelines have been developed in conjunction with the Pharmaceutical Society and are available for comment on the [Consultations](#) page of our website. The guidelines bring together general principles and obligations from a number of different statements into one reference resource to make it more practical for pharmacists. The Council statement on the promotion and supply of medicines over the internet will be updated in 2014.

Practice Issues

Pharmacist Vaccinators and first aid

First aid requirements for pharmacist vaccinators have been revised and updated in the Council statement. The statement now reads *"Pharmacists who are vaccinators must hold a current CPR certificate consistent with the requirements of the New Zealand Resuscitation Council (NZRC) Level 3. Council also recommends pharmacists have available an adrenaline auto-injector action plan"*. Please ensure that if you are a vaccinator, you have the required level of first aid competency.

Prescriber ID numbers

The Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (the Board) has raised concern about the significant number of incomplete or incorrect prescriber registration ID numbers being entered by pharmacies against an optometrist's prescription. The Board uses the prescribing data to ensure optometrists are prescribing appropriately, but cannot use data where there are errors in the information provided by pharmacies. The prescription ID should be in the following format: 60-xxxxx (where x = unique five digit registration number), and the prescriber should be assigned to the Board from the drop-down selection list. The Board has asked optometrists to take extra care when writing or typing their ID onto the prescription so it can be transcribed accurately at the pharmacy; we are asking that whoever is entering the prescription into the computer in the pharmacy also takes extra care to minimise the errors.

Check before substituting melatonin for Circadin®

Not all melatonin formulations are the same. Circadin®, a prolonged release form of melatonin, is a medicine registered in New Zealand *for use as a monotherapy for the short term treatment of primary insomnia characterized by poor quality of sleep in patients who are aged 55 or over*. Although alternative brands of melatonin are available, they are immediate release products, are considered dietary supplements, and are not registered as medicines. When Circadin® has been prescribed by brand, check with the prescriber and the patient before substituting another brand; it may be that the prolonged release formulation is really what is required.

Health Equity Statement

A Health Equity Statement for the pharmacy profession has been developed and endorsed by PRISM (Pharmacy Reference Group for the Implementation of the Strategy for Māori Health) stakeholders. Equity in health can be defined as the absence of socially unjust or unfair health disparities and asserts that all people have the opportunity to reach their full health potential. They should not be disadvantaged because of social or economic status, religion, age, gender, ethnicity or other socially determined circumstance. The [statement](#) is available on our website.

Maintaining effective professional relations

Pharmacists are renowned for being 'prescription police', sorting out many and varied prescription issues on a daily basis to ensure patients are dispensed what the prescriber intended. We have all shared anecdotes with colleagues about the errors we've seen and many of us have considered sending the funnier ones for publication. However, in doing so we need to remind ourselves of our obligations under the code of ethics, to foster and maintain effective professional relationships with colleagues and other healthcare providers i.e. to not publicly ridicule another health professional. Such was the case with a recent mystery script in Pharmacy Today –the prescriber's profession was identified causing the relevant regulatory authority to express their concerns to us. If you believe a prescriber is prescribing poorly and has an incorrect understanding of funding issues, or that the prescription is outside the prescriber's scope of practice or is clinically incorrect, please discuss this with the prescriber in the first instance. If your concerns are not addressed adequately, the next option is to raise the issue with the appropriate Council e.g. Medical Council, Midwifery Council, Dental Council. Collaboration between healthcare professionals and maintaining effective relationships will support the safe delivery of patient care.

Holiday office hours

Our office will close at mid-day on 24th December and will reopen again on Monday 6th January. The team at the Pharmacy Council wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a happy and safe 2014.

