

November 2014 Newsletter

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Message from the Chair



In September the Pharmacy Council celebrated 10 years of operation as the responsible authority for pharmacists under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003. Along with the other 15 regulatory bodies in New Zealand responsible for ensuring their professions are competent and fit to practise, the Council has established and continually refined its processes under the Act. What has not changed at all in these 10 years is the Council's uncompromising commitment to public safety.

In this issue, we update you on the Council's recent activities including ratification of the competence standards, pharmacy accuracy checking technician project, intern pharmacist assessments, relevant practice issues, and staff changes. We are also pleased to advise that our 2014 Workforce Report is now available on our website. This Report contains a wealth of information, provides a snapshot of the workforce at the end of our financial year, and indicates trends and register changes since we first started to publish the reports in 2005.

Also in this newsletter we remind all pharmacists of their obligations to notify the Council of any concerns they have with respect to a colleague or other health practitioner. Communication to Council regarding the fitness to practise of an individual pharmacist is brought to our attention through various channels, but frequently a colleague or employer is the first person to be aware of any issues. If appropriate, a notification can enable the Council to put in place a supportive or rehabilitative process to assist an individual pharmacist to improve their competence or take steps to ensure that both they and the public are safe. The Council has established processes in place to manage all notifications including conduct, competence, and health.

The Council will hold its final meeting for 2015 late this month and our last pre-Christmas newsletter will be published early December.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Andrew Bary', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Bary, Chair

Sometimes notifying the Pharmacy Council is a 'must-do'

It is important that all pharmacists understand their obligation to make the health and well-being of patients their first priority. If you have reason to believe another pharmacist's performance, conduct or health may compromise public safety, you must report your concerns to the Registrar. We appreciate that it might be difficult to do this, especially if there is an employment or collegial relationship with the pharmacist about whom you have concerns. However, it is not acceptable to allow the pharmacist to become someone else's problem.

Employers have an obligation to notify Council if a pharmacist employee (including locums) is dismissed or resigns for reasons relating to his or her competence. Pharmacists also have a mandatory legal obligation to report a pharmacist (or other registered health practitioner) if they have reason to believe that they are unable to perform their professional duties because of a mental or physical condition.

On receipt of such information, the Council will consider the most appropriate action. If appropriate, notifications may result in a rehabilitative or supportive process being implemented which can result in a positive outcome for both public safety and the pharmacist. Depending on the nature of the concerns, they may be referred to a Professional Conduct Committee. This Committee has substantial legal powers to investigate the concerns, to determine the veracity of the evidence, and if appropriate bring a charge against the pharmacist to the Health Practitioners' Disciplinary Tribunal.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the notification process, please do not hesitate to contact the Deputy Registrar, Owain George – o.george@pharmacycouncil.org.nz

Competence Standards review

In July, Council ratified the revised competence standards and scopes of practice for the profession. The new standards will come into effect on 1 January 2015.

The key changes include grouping competencies into more contemporary clusters (domains); combining dispensing and extemporaneous compounding into one domain; combining primary care and medicines management competencies into a single domain; removing the evidence examples but including guidance sections and adding a number of new competencies eg Quality improvement. As with the current standards, some domains are mandatory ie Domains M1 (Professionalism in Pharmacy) and M2 (Communication and collaboration) while others are optional. This allows for academic pharmacists or pharmacists working in non-traditional roles to retain an Annual Practising Certificate (APC) without having to maintain competence in areas not relevant to their practice.

There are four optional domains (O1 – O4) but most competencies in these domains will effectively become mandatory for pharmacists who are in direct patient care roles. A significant change from the previous standards is that you will be able to select single competencies from these optional domains where appropriate; the Council's expectation is that peer input for the practice review, according to the CPD framework, will ensure you are working in domains and competencies relevant to your area of practice, and that your CPD reflects this.

Council would like to thank everyone who took time to attend the regional and focus group meetings to give their feedback and those who responded to the consultation. Thanks also goes to the review group who provided input and oversight for the project, and without whom the final document would not be as robust and future-proofed as it is.

To view the new Competence Standards go to the [What's New](#) page on our website.

Pharmacy Accuracy Checking Technicians (PACT)

The Pharmaceutical Society, on behalf of Health Workforce NZ, is undertaking a project to investigate the viability of introducing pharmacy accuracy checking technicians into the NZ pharmacy workforce. A

Steering Group has been established to oversee all aspects of the project.

The key evaluation question being investigated is whether having an accuracy checking technician in the dispensary will free up a pharmacist's time to engage in, or expand on the provision of patient-centred services without compromising public safety or the accurate dispensing of medicines.

Demonstration sites across both community and hospital pharmacies have been selected through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process. Technicians involved in the project will operate under supervision for a specified time in these pharmacies after being trained and certified to carry out the final accuracy check on dispensed items. The addition of an accuracy checking technician does not remove the involvement of a pharmacist from the dispensing process. A pharmacist will still be required to ensure that the prescription is legally correct, clinically safe, appropriate to dispense, and to counsel patients on their medicines.

The project will run over 12 months. Data will be collected and collated through all phases from every demonstration site to allow for a full and robust evaluation process to be undertaken, after which a final report on project outcomes will be written.

For further information go to <http://www.pito.org.nz/pharmacy-accuracy-checking-technicians-project.html> or contact Alasdair McIntosh on (04) 802 0032

Intern pharmacist assessments

Written exam

Results from the July and September Written Exams for 2014 have been sent to all candidates. Interns did very well in their preparation for the exam and the pass rates demonstrate the ability of interns to apply what they have learnt.

The dates for the 2015 Written Exam have been confirmed. The first exam for 2015 is March 8 and applications for this exam will close on 31 January.

Please visit our website - http://www.pharmacycouncil.org.nz/intern_page; or contact our Assessment and Examinations Manager, Peter Lourié, p.lourie@pharmacycouncil.org.nz if you have any questions or require further information.

Assessment Centre 2014

The second Assessment Centre for 2014 will be held in Wellington and Auckland on 11 November. The Assessment Centre is the final summative assessment for interns, and over 200 interns will attend. If you have any queries regarding the Assessment Centre, please contact our Assessment and Examinations Manager Peter Lourié, p.lourie@pharmacycouncil.org.nz

Practise issues

Methadone dispensing errors

The Health Quality and Safety Commission recently reported on the number of methadone dispensing errors that continue to occur in community pharmacy. The commission undertook an aggregated analysis of 36 errors to determine the key themes and possible associated contributing factors. Two key themes were identified – incorrect dosing and incorrect medicine. Although no harm was reported in two thirds of the errors, 89% of the incorrect dose errors were doses that were too high whereby increased patient monitoring was put in place.

If you have regular methadone patients, ensure all staff involved in dispensing methadone have appropriate training and are familiar with your pharmacy's procedures for dispensing - this includes locum pharmacists. Ensure distractions and interruptions are minimised and there is adequate checking of patient identification when handing out the prescription. Consider reviewing and strengthening your

processes and systems even if you haven't been involved in a dispensing error and use it as an opportunity to refresh staff knowledge.

Opioid Substitution Treatment practice guidelines 2014

These revised guidelines contain practical and evidence-based advice for the treatment of patients with opioid dependence. There is a comprehensive section on the responsibilities of pharmacists including information on training which is offered either by local specialist services and/or online at www.blink.co.nz

Sildenafil reclassification and training

You may be aware that sildenafil has recently been classified to Prescription medicine except *when sold in the manufacturer's original pack of not more than 12 tablets of 100mg (or less) for the treatment of erectile dysfunction in males aged 35-70 years by a registered pharmacist who has successfully completed a training programme endorsed by PSNZ.*

Council expects pharmacists to act professionally and abide by the requirements of the reclassification ie you must successfully complete the PSNZ-endorsed training. If we receive a complaint from a member of the public or another health professional regarding the practice of a pharmacist with respect to the promotion or supply of sildenafil, the complaint may result in the Council investigating it or referring it to the Health and Disability Commissioner or to a professional conduct committee.

Reporting on Adverse Events or Medication Errors

The New Zealand Pharmacovigilance Centre (NZPhvC) serves as an umbrella title to support three synergistic monitoring programmes that contribute to and support the safety of medicines in New Zealand through voluntary reporting of adverse events. The centre incorporates CARM (Centre for Adverse Reaction Monitoring) and MERP (Medication Error Reporting Programme). MERP collects and analyses voluntary reports of actual and 'near miss' medication errors occurring in primary care. NZPhvC encourages people to report any errors that occur in the context of the use of medications with the aim of enhancing the safety of medication use by sharing information about medication errors to reduce and prevent harmful errors.

Although healthcare professionals have traditionally submitted the majority of ADR reports, anyone can report a reaction. You can report suspected ADRs to CARM using the following options:

- Online reporting or using electronic forms at <https://nzphvc.otago.ac.nz/report/>
- Freepost Yellow Cards available from the address below, and also found in the MIMS New Ethicals and inside the back cover of the Prescriber Update.
- CARM is available to discuss ADRs by telephone and also accepts reports by email or fax. Outside office hours a telephone-answering machine will take messages
- An iPhone/iPad iOS application is also available via the NZPhvC website <https://nzphvc.otago.ac.nz/app>

Competence Programme for Australian Pharmacists registering in NZ

The Council recently reviewed its policy for registering Australian pharmacists. The requirements for registering remain the same, that is:

- Completion of a minimum of one month of supervised practice (full time or equivalent).
- Acceptable performance in the Council's oral Law and Ethics assessment on completion of the period of supervised practice.

Based on advice received, Council has now set these requirements as a competence programme and the programme must be completed within three months of registration.

Criminal history checks

From December 2014, New Zealand and Australian graduates registering in the intern pharmacist scope of practice will need to provide a copy of their record of criminal convictions. This can be obtained from the Ministry of Justice. (The Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004 applies).

This requirement will also be implemented for New Zealand or Australian residents applying for reinstatement to the pharmacist scope of practice from 1 January 2015.

For further information visit: <http://www.justice.govt.nz/services/criminal-records>

2014 Workforce Report

The Council's 2014 Workforce Report is now available on our website:

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

The information in this Report has been compiled from aggregated data collected at the time of annual practising certificate (APC) renewal and registration of pharmacists. The Report is a snapshot of the workforce as at 30 June and a record of registration trends. If you have any queries about this data, please contact our Registrations Officer, David Priest – d.priest@pharmacycouncil.org.nz

Health Quality & Safety Commission's Serious Adverse Events report

The work and resources the health sector has put into getting better at reporting incidents of patient harm are reflected in the Health Quality & Safety Commission's latest annual report into serious adverse events (SAEs), released today.

Commission Chair Professor Alan Merry says the improved reporting is encouraging: 'Patients who are harmed during health care have a right to understand what happened and to expect that everything possible will be done to prevent the same thing from happening to someone else in the future.'

The 2013/14 report shows a four percent increase in events reported by district health boards (DHBs), with 454 SAEs, up from 437 in 2012/13 – the rise a consequence of steadily improving reporting systems and DHBs' commitment to learning from events, the Commission believes.

There is also a growing range of non-DHB providers reporting their SAEs, with 104 from private surgical hospitals, aged residential care facilities, disability services, the National Screening Unit and hospices.

For the full 2013/14 SAE report, summary report and FAQs, visit <http://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/reportable-events/publications-and-resources/publication/1832/>

Staff appointments

We are pleased to welcome Trudi Thomas-Morton to the registrations team in the position of Registrar Support. Trudi will work closely with the Deputy Registrar and Registrations Officers in the areas of registration, competence, complaints and discipline. Trudi has been with the Pharmacy Council for over two years and we are delighted that she has agreed to take this opportunity. We are also very pleased to welcome Felicity Campbell to the position of Executive Assistant and Jane Moginie to the position of Education Advisor.

How to contact us

Please let us know if you change your postal, work or email addresses at any time during the year. This will help us to ensure you receive all our correspondence, including our newsletters by email.

You can contact us by:

Phone: 04-495-0330

Email: enquiries@pharmacycouncil.org.nz

Website: www.pharmacycouncil.org.nz