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Media release

Pharmacy Council takes “right touch” regulatory approach for prescriber qualification

Pharmacists wanting to become prescribing pharmacists no longer have to complete a post graduate diploma to be eligible for the pharmacist prescriber programme.

The changes were announced today by the Pharmacy Council, which commissioned an independent report looking at whether it was still appropriate to require the completion of a postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Pharmacy prior to beginning the postgraduate Pharmacist Prescriber Certificate Programme.

Chief Executive Michael Pead says in considering any change to a qualification pathway the Pharmacy Council is primarily concerned that the learning delivers registrants with the required competencies.

“This was looked at very carefully, and the Pharmacy Council, along with the independent report, found the learning delivered through the pharmacist prescriber programme provides what is required to ensure those completing the training can practise in a safe and competent way.

“As the regulator it is absolutely vital that we continue to ensure that the regulations are effective in keeping the public safe. But at the same time we are always mindful that we don’t want to over-regulate by mandating requirements that are not necessary. We work hard to maintain the right touch regulatory approach to achieve a good balance.”

He says qualified pharmacists have been able to prescribe since 2013 and at that time the decision was made to have the diploma as a pre-requisite.

“At the time it was the right decision to have the diploma as a requirement, however with all decisions it is important to review things to ensure it works in the current environment. We are confident, based on the independent report, that the certificate alone delivers what is required to ensure prescribing pharmacists are competent to practise and provide safe care for patients.”

He says the removal of the diploma as an entry requirement will improve access to the course for pharmacists who have other relevant qualifications and experience that make them good candidates for prescribing.

“It is pleasing that the Council has been able to improve access to those wanting to move into pharmacist prescribing, and at the same time maintaining regulatory oversight of safe prescribing practice.”

“In addition to the certificate programme, the Pharmacy Council also has clear safety requirements including pharmacist prescribers always working collaboratively within a team in which they are not the primary diagnostician”, he says.

Pharmacist prescribers must also work to a practice plan which defines their area of practice, and the ethical principles and competence standards require prescribers to work within the limits of their knowledge and skill.

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For more information contact Pharmacy Council Chief Executive Michael Pead 04 495 0330