



Society's Pharmacy Workforce Forum Ensuring Capability – Fit for Purpose 2014 and Onwards

Our pharmacy workforce can be encouraged by the outcomes from a recent pharmacy workforce forum hosted by the Pharmaceutical Society. Present were hospital and community pharmacists, pharmacy proprietors, clinical and advisory pharmacists, rural pharmacists, interns and pharmacy technicians. Also attending were representatives of the various pharmacy organisations - PSNZ, College of Pharmacists, Pharmacy Guild, NZ Hospital Pharmacists' Association, Clinical Advisory Pharmacists Association, Pharmacy Council, Pharmacy Industry Training Organisation and the Community Pharmacists Leaders Forum, - the Schools of Pharmacy, Open Polytechnic, Royal College of GPs, Ministry of Health Workforce team, District Health Boards and the Ministry of Education. All were discussing the varying jobs and upcoming roles of pharmacists and technicians and the skills, knowledge and learning that is needed for them to undertake these roles. In essence, the forum aimed to realise the potential of the pharmacy workforce to ensure we have the capability to deliver the optimal use of medicines outcomes of the NZ Medicines Strategy.

In opening the forum, the Associate Minister of Health, the Hon Peter Dunne, exclaimed *"This is the dawn of an exciting future for pharmacy!"* He acknowledged that *"a strong and vibrant pharmacy sector is fundamental to realising the outcomes of Medicines New Zealand"* and that *"pharmacists are the profession most qualified to understand the use of medicines"*.

Peter Dunne also made specific mention of the recent decision of pharmacists and GPs to work more closely together with the ground-breaking agreement between the Pharmaceutical Society and the Royal NZ College of General Practitioners. *"This Memorandum of Understanding to improve medicines use through enhanced and better collaboration is precisely the kind of development we need to see"*, he said.

The 40 participant stakeholders heard from pharmacists and technicians about their varied roles in the provision of pharmacy services and what they expect to be doing in the near future. There were also speakers who discussed workforce capacity, the continuum of medicines management and undergraduate and post graduate pharmacy education.

President of the Society, Elizabeth Plant, referred to the 10-year Vision for Pharmacists from 2004 to 2014. This vision has four years left to run and, she said, *"We need by then to have a workforce that is capable and fit for purpose to provide dispensing, medicine management, health promotion and health assessment/monitoring/screening services from an evolving range of business entities that are appropriate to each location and range of patient needs"*. *"Such entities are expected to include community pharmacies, pharmacist facilitators, multi-discipline health centres that include pharmacists and hospital/secondary care pharmacists"*, she said.

The forum workshop sessions identified and discussed some of the issues that inhibit or are likely to inhibit change, and the representatives of the various organisations present agreed to work with the Society in five key areas over the next year or so that will see these barriers dealt with.

The five work streams identified are:

1. To develop a vocational map that provides a professional career structure for all sectors of the pharmacy workforce - pharmacists, technicians and assistants.

2. To fully define an appropriate skills and knowledge learning structure which will be aligned to this vocational map, and identify education and training providers at all levels.
3. To co-ordinate a campaign across the whole health sector to demonstrate the professional capabilities of pharmacists.
4. To clearly define the collaborative roles of healthcare providers on the continuum of medicine management.
5. To address pharmacist workforce capacity issues, in terms of maintaining a supply of appropriately trained and skilled pharmacists for medicines management roles.

The forum acknowledged and supported the economic modelling of pharmacy funding and services that is currently being undertaken for the Pharmacy Services Agreement. It also urged the steering committee to focus on proving the funding model options that support the extended roles of pharmacists.

The Society undertook to facilitate a review of the DHBNZ Framework of Pharmacist Services, to make changes to the MUR reporting requirements and to define minor ailment services that could be funded by DHBs.

Society CEO, Richard Townley, said *"The Workforce Forum provided the opportunity for all the key organisations and agencies involved with pharmacist services, to share expert knowledge and opinion and achieve a common understanding of the required workforce direction, capability and barriers that need to change."*

Richard Townley
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