

Communiqué

16 January 2017

The Victorian Pharmacy Authority (the "Authority") met on 10 January 2017 at the Authority offices.

Office relocation

The offices of the Authority have been located at 369 Royal Parade Parkville since its commencement in 2010. Its predecessor, the Pharmacy Board of Victoria moved to this site in 2008 after having its offices at the Victorian College of Pharmacy from 1960.

The Authority employs significantly fewer staff than its predecessor and the current office space is surplus to its needs. When its current lease expires on 28 February 2017 the Authority will relocate to a smaller office space, significantly reducing overheads and improving its efficiency.

The Authority's new location will be Level 2, 15-31 Pelham Street Carlton. At this stage a commencement date of 1 March 2017 is anticipated with further details to follow.

A recent inspection – recurring deficiencies

From time to time the Authority invites pharmacy owners to attend meetings of the Authority to discuss deficiencies identified during inspections, particularly in cases where the same or similar deficiencies had been identified at a previous inspection.

This month a pharmacy owner attended a meeting to discuss an inspection involving the following:

- Unsatisfactory security of the key to the Schedule 8 safe, in that the key was stored overnight in a basket above the safe;
- Schedule 4 medicines held to fill dose administration aids not stored in the dispensary or a locked cupboard;
- Schedule 3 medicines displayed in a way that promoted them or drew the undue attention of the public (including prominent price tickets for Ventolin inhalers, showing the price advantage for multiple purchases);
- Schedule 3 medicines containing codeine displayed contrary to the VPA Guidelines;
- Inadequate records for assembling dose administration containers;
- Absence of mandatory references or presence of superseded editions.

Most of the deficiencies listed on the inspection report were also listed on a previous inspection report.

The Authority was concerned that the pharmacist's lack of knowledge appeared to contribute to the failure to comply with legislation and guidelines.

The Authority reminds pharmacists that the self-audit form available on its [website](#) provides a useful tool for pharmacists to monitor their own compliance. The Authority's Guidelines are also readily available on the [website](#).

What must I do to obtain a licence or premises registration?

When the Authority assesses applications, and is satisfied that all the requirements of the *Pharmacy Regulation Act 2010* (the "Act") and its Guidelines are met, it approves licence applications in principle, and agrees in principle to applications for premises registration. These in principle approvals allow the applicant to go ahead and purchase or construct the pharmacy. Conditional licences and registration are not issued until the applicant self-certifies to the Authority that the purchase has been settled or the premises have been completed according to the agreed plans. Notification forms are provided for this purpose. Applicants may use these forms to pay their registration and licence fees.

There have been recent cases where applicants have commenced carrying on a pharmacy business without lodging a notification, and consequently without a business licence or premises registration. It is an offence under the Act for a person to establish or carry on a pharmacy business unless the Authority has registered the premises and granted a licence to the owner(s).

The Authority urges all applicants to read correspondence regarding applications with care to ensure all necessary requirements are met. It is not acceptable to delegate these roles to others.

There have also been recent cases where applicants have certified that pharmacy premises have been constructed in accordance with agreed plans and requirements, with inspectors discovering non-compliance in critical areas such as security at the time of inspection.

Such actions jeopardise the Authority's continued use of a self-certification approach which would inevitably lead to delays in commencing business. All pharmacy owners should ensure they have adequate oversight of the application process and at commencement of business.

Recent Panel Hearings

The Authority held no Panel Hearings in December 2016.

Toni Riley
Chair
16 January 2017