



Communiqué

26 May 2017

The Victorian Pharmacy Authority (the "Authority") met on 9 May 2017 at the Authority offices.

Pharmacy registration and licence renewals

Invoices were sent out electronically in the third week of May for annual renewals of:

- a) Pharmacy, pharmacy department and pharmacy depot premises registration, and
- b) Licences to carry on a pharmacy business or pharmacy department.

All licence and registration renewals were sent via email to registered premises, not to individual owners. Pharmacy owners and pharmacists in charge will need to ensure appropriate distribution of renewal notices to ensure payment.

Please ensure that you have notified the Authority of the current email address for any registered premises and received all your invoices.

Registration and licence renewals must be received with payment by 30 June 2017. There is no provision in the *Pharmacy Regulation Act 2010* for late payments. If a licence or registration lapses there may be serious professional and/or legal obligations for licensees and pharmacists practising in unregistered premises.

Payment options again include BPAY, secure online payment via VPA website, cheque, credit card or EFT.

Feedback on communications

The Authority is seeking feedback on its communications.

We would appreciate your participation in a short survey. Your feedback will help us evaluate the effectiveness of our current communications and ensure we include information that is relevant and useful to pharmacists and stakeholders. The survey will take approximately five minutes to complete. Your participation is completely anonymous.

Please find a link to complete the survey here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6JM2L55>

Your time in completing the survey is very much appreciated.

Background

The Authority is responsible for administration of the *Pharmacy Regulation Act 2010* which provides for the regulation of pharmacy businesses, pharmacy departments and pharmacy depots.

The Authority licenses the owners of pharmacy businesses and pharmacy departments and registers the premises of pharmacy businesses, pharmacy departments and pharmacy depots. The Authority also issues guidelines representing its current policies, conducts inspections of registered premises, maintains a public register of licensees and registered premises, and advises the Minister on matters relating to its functions.

The guiding principle of the Authority is to act in the public interest to make the pharmacy system safe.

The Authority has committed to seek feedback on its communications with the aim of identifying opportunities to improve its regulatory performance and reduce regulatory burden on small business.

Panel Hearings

There were three Panel Hearings held in April 2017. All three licensees were cautioned and one is to have the premises reinspected at their cost. The following is a summary of some of the matters considered.

Case 1

There were two security issues in that the S8 safes were not adequately attached and there was no direct alarm coverage of one safe. Pharmacotherapy transactions were inadequately recorded and there were labelling deficiencies with methadone takeaways.

Case 2

The licensee had applied for premises registration and completed and signed the relevant form. On inspection, it was observed that a monitored alarm system was not operating and there appeared to be inadequate locks to the doors to the perimeter of the building. Hot running water was not available in the dispensary.

Recording of transactions of S8 poisons was unsatisfactory, Schedule 3 medicines containing codeine were not displayed in accordance with the Authority's Guidelines and pseudoephedrine products were in view of the public. Privacy screens had not been installed.

It is the responsibility of the licensee to ensure that the pharmacy is fitted out and properly equipped before submitting the application form.

The Panel made no finding about the security and plumbing allegations in light of conflicting evidence.

Case 3

The substance of this hearing was outdated and poor housekeeping. Transactions in methadone and buprenorphine were so cumbersome that a new approach was needed to manage the documentation. Unwanted, expired and identifiable returned Schedule 8 poisons were stored insecurely. Disposal of records was also poorly managed and labelling of dose administration containers did not meet legal or professional standards.

Comment

In the third case, Panel members formed the opinion that the licensee had not taken time to step back and consider whether the practices and procedures at the pharmacy were consistent with contemporary standards. The day to day pressures in conducting a pharmacy can overwhelm and it may be useful to invest in the services of a consulting pharmacist to analyse the practices and recommend changes, such as using relevant software and improving workflow and customer traffic.

Inspections and Panel Hearings

During the first quarter of 2017, there were 230 inspections of various kinds. Arising from these, the Authority decided to conduct 14 Panel Hearings and invited owners to attend a meeting of the Authority to discuss an inspection on four occasions.

Toni Riley
Chair
26 May 2017