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From the Chair and Chief Executive

Kia ora koutou katoa

Recently our team was devastated with the passing of a very special colleague – Pam Duncan. We have included a farewell message in our newsletter to acknowledge her huge importance to our team. We have truly appreciated the many kind words and heart-warming thoughts that have been shared with many of the team. Thank you all. In times of hardship, it has been comforting to respect and appreciate how easily the debate of work issues are put to one side and the care and concern for our team has come to the forefront.

It is hard to believe we are already a third of the way through the year and although different from last year, the pressures and workload has not abated. We acknowledge and respect the continued efforts of pharmacists to do the best for their patients in what are still very trying times under the cloud of COVID-19 as it continues to rage around the world. The economic impact is immense, but the humanitarian effects are even greater.

In that light, the Pharmacy Council is often challenged as to whether regulation could be more lenient in times of highly pressured workloads times, to make it easier on pharmacists under stress.

Sadly, the short answer is no, as the regulatory measures are all about protecting the public and assuring their safety and well-being. With good reason, in pressured times it is even more critical that regulatory requirements continue to be met, if not exceeded. As workloads increase and the stress levels are raised, the pressure to maintain your same high levels of professional practice becomes amplified because this is exactly when errors, big and small, come to the fore.

The question of relaxing the rules at times like this also gets asked of other health practitioner regulatory bodies in New Zealand and around the world and the answer is uniformly the same. We acknowledge the difficulty, but all health practitioners must always strive to perform at the top of their game, regardless of the difficulties. In saying that, the mental health of pharmacists and their teams are equally important, and pharmacists must be encouraged to put their own well-being and that of their teams ahead of all else.

There are several critical issues in this newsletter which we hope you take the time to read and consider.



Ngā mihi

Arthur Bauld / Michael Pead
Chair/Chief Executive

Farewell to our Special Colleague



In early April 2021 Pam Duncan sadly passed away after a short illness. She was a much-loved member of the team at the Pharmacy Council. Pam was a practising pharmacist, the Manager Compliance, Registration and Standards, and an integral member of our team and the wider pharmacy community. Within Council, she held responsibility for policies, standards, oversight of registrations processes, projects etc.

Pam was born in Palmerston North, though throughout her childhood, she lived in many parts of the country including Hamilton and Turangi. She completed her Diploma in Pharmacy at the Central Institute of Technology in 1986, and a Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Pharmacy via University of Auckland in 2015. Pam worked as a community pharmacist at several pharmacies, most notably at Owles Pharmacy in Naenae for over 15 years (1996-2015). She also mentored many interns and pharmacists over the years both formally and informally. This routine continued as Pam supported both non-pharmacist and pharmacist team members at Council.

Pam started at Council as Professional Standards Advisor in May 2015, and gradually took on additional responsibilities, reaching the position of Manager Compliance, Registration and Standards in August 2019. She worked tirelessly to facilitate regulation that enabled pharmacists to work at the top of their scope and to do so safely. A selection of many achievements during her time at Council include her involvement in the:

- review of the Code of Ethics resulting in the 2018 (and current) version
- reclassification of multiple medicines to allow pharmacist supply
- addition of the administration of injectable medicines to the Pharmacist scope of practice
- introduction of the Community Pharmacy Anticoagulation Management Service (CPAMs) programme
- setting of numerous standards and policies



As if this wasn't enough, Pam contributed time to her local primary health organisation, Te Awakairangi Health Network, and to the Wellington branch of the Pharmaceutical Society.

We will remember Pam as highly intelligent; and as is common with pharmacists, exceedingly practical and compassionate. Whether interacting with members of the public, sector agents, pharmacists, or intern pharmacists, Pam always brought a human approach to her role. While never one to network for the sake of networking, her uncanny ability to build rapport enabled her to nurture valued connections throughout all fields of pharmacy practice, up and down the country. This was evidenced by the large turnout of pharmacist friends and colleagues at her funeral and the many messages of condolence received at the Council office for which we are extremely grateful.

Those of us that had the pleasure of working day-to-day with Pam, will always remember her warm and caring personality, the substantial and varied collection of shoes underneath her desk, and the continuous supply of chocolate and sweet treats which she often shared. She was an inspiring senior colleague who encouraged us to explore our full potential. Pam was upbeat, positive, passionate, and creative in her approach to life. She would always be eager to organise workplace celebrations, with baking provided, and ensure that we benefited from her weekend bargain buys (memorably, a 5 kg bag of jet planes lollies). We fondly remember her stories of gold panning expeditions with her brother in isolated areas of the West Coast, 5 a.m. walks in the hills surrounding the Hutt Valley before work, and the antics of her little dog Louis.

As much as we miss Pam's influence in our work and lives, our thoughts are with Pam's husband, two sons, wider family, and the many friends that she leaves behind.

Pam was awesome and she will always be awesome to us.

MyRecert - Spot the difference!

Many of you have already started familiarising yourselves with the new MyRecert platform. Here is a summary of the different uses of the new MyRecert, and your existing Council online account.

MyRecert (<https://myrecert.pharmacycouncil.org.nz/>)

By now you will have received a couple of emails about the new MyRecert platform. This platform is the new place to record your continuing professional development (CPD). Your login details are your registration number and, once you have logged on with a randomised password, you will be asked to make a new password.

Please note, this is the only CPD required by Council for your recertification at APC renewal time

You will notice that the requirements for CPD have also changed and are detailed in the Guidance section through the "How to?" button. This APC year the requirements have been adjusted to allow for familiarisation with the new platform and requirements. For your convenience, there is a link to MyRecert from the Online account login page.

Online account (<https://register.pharmacycouncil.org.nz/>)

Your Pharmacy Council online account remains the same as before, with your usual login details.

Here, is where you can:

- submit applications, for example:
 - apply for renewal of your APC, or non-practising status in March each year; or
 - apply for removal, return to practice or certificates of current professional status at any stage throughout the year.
- request changes to personal details, for example, your legal name (certified documentation may be required);
- update your contact details;
- submit a disclosure;
- download your current annual practising certificate or copies of receipts.



Welcome

Welcome to MyRecert, the platform where you will record your professional development activities to meet the annual Pharmacy Council recertification requirements.

The Pharmacy Council welcomes Dr Jerome Ng

The Pharmacy Council is pleased to introduce Dr Jerome Ng (Chief Strategic Advisor) to help advance a number of key projects and ensure we deliver our Strategic Plan.

Jerome is passionate about co-designing with whanau, consumers, clinicians and managers innovative and transformative quality governance, improvement and data/digital systems. Jerome has a successful and award-winning track record in and outside of pharmacy having held several senior leadership, Honorary and Board roles across a number of practice, research and policy related organisations.

Aotearoa's Pharmacist of the Year in 2017 and a HealthRoundTable Innovation Fellow with several postgraduate qualifications and research papers, he brings to Te Pou Whakamana Kaimatū o Aotearoa a unique blend of systems-think, skillsets, expertise and experience to further enhance Pharmacy Council's capability to contribute to better and more equitable health outcomes and whanau experiences for New Zealanders.

End of Life Choice Act 2019

The End of Life Choice Act 2019 comes into force on 7 November 2021. The Ministry of Health is clarifying the process for providing this service. The Act states that pharmacists who are willing to dispense medication for the purposes of end of life, should opt-in to a list of practitioners maintained by the Support and Consultation for End of Life in New Zealand (SCENZ) Group. This group is yet to be established, but will be responsible for:

- preparing standards of care;
- advising on the required medical and legal procedures; and,
- providing practical assistance if assistance is requested.

Once the Act comes into force, the Pharmacist scope of practice is permissive of the provision of end of life services and medicines.

Additionally, the Pharmacy Defence Association (PDA) has confirmed that, provided a pharmacist is adequately trained and competent in performing the process, and has opted into the list held by the SCENZ Group, PDA's insurance policies will cover this activity for PDA members.

Pharmacists (and any other health practitioner) must not initiate a discussion with any patient about assisted dying; but should provide professional, unbiased information if a patient requests it. Pharmacists will have the right to conscientiously object and not offer end of life services. The details of this are being clarified with the Ministry of Health. However, it is likely that the expectations will be similar to other circumstances when a pharmacist is unable to fulfil a patient's request for services. We continue to work with the Ministry of Health to clarify how the legislation will operate in practice.

Covid-19 - Anti-Vaccination Statement

The Dental and Medical Council have issued a [joint statement](#) regarding the expectations for their respective practitioners. See the Pharmacy Council's statement, expanding on the responsibilities for pharmacists below.

Pharmacy Council guidance statement on vaccination against COVID-19 and your professional responsibilities

Vaccination is a crucial part of the New Zealand public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Health practitioners have the responsibility to help protect their tangata whaiora and the wider community by getting their own COVID-19 vaccination. By protecting themselves, they will not only protect their own families and colleagues but ensure they are healthy and able to provide health services to their tangata whaiora in a time of crisis.

In line with other responsible authorities, the Pharmacy Council has the explicit expectation that all pharmacists will take up the opportunity to be vaccinated, unless medically contraindicated.

Professional and ethical duty:

Pharmacists have an ethical and professional obligation to protect and promote the health of their tangata whaiora and the public, and to participate in government led public health interventions. Vaccination will play a critical role in protecting the health of the New Zealand public by reducing the community risk of acquiring and transmitting COVID-19.

Patient/ tangata whaiora rights:

Additionally, tangata whaiora have the *Right to be fully informed* (Right 6, [Code of Health & Disability Services Consumers' Rights](#)). Tangata whaiora are entitled to information that a reasonable consumer, in their circumstances, would expect to receive. Pharmacists should be prepared to provide accurate and complete information to tangata whaiora if asked about their own vaccination status, to enable them to make an informed decision on their own level of possible and expected risks.

Evidence-based advice:

All pharmacists have the professional responsibility to provide evidence-based advice about COVID-19 vaccinations to those who ask. That advice must be critically appraised and make a conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of the best available current research. You should be prepared and able to discuss

evidence-based information about vaccinations and its benefits and risks to assist informed decision making. There is information on the [Ministry of Health \(MOH\) website](#) to support engagement with staff or colleagues who may be hesitant about getting a vaccine.

Addressing vaccine hesitancy:

As a pharmacist you already know the importance and success of vaccinations as part of previous global public health interventions to reduce and even eradicate diseases. 'Vaccine hesitancy' is an emerging concern in relation to COVID-19, where individuals who generally accept the principle of vaccination hold concerns about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines or the need for vaccination against COVID-19.

Making an informed decision:

Pharmacists have an important role to play in addressing vaccination hesitancy. While respecting an individual's right to choose, including the right to refuse vaccination, you have an obligation to explain the risks and benefits of vaccination both for that individual and for society at large. You should do this by seeking to understand the reason for their hesitancy and by providing information that is impartial, relevant, up-to-date, and independent of your personal views to address their concerns and help them make an informed decision

Further information

The responsibilities outlined in this statement are described in the [Code of Ethics 2018](#) (COE) and [Competence Standards for the Pharmacy Profession](#) (CS), including:

COE Principle 2 & clause D: A pharmacist practises and promotes patient-centred care.

A pharmacist explains the options available, including the risks and benefits, by providing information that is impartial, relevant, up-to-date and independent of any personal commercial considerations to help patients make informed decisions.

CS Domain O2: Public healthcare

The Domain encompasses the pharmacist's awareness of, and contribution to public and preventative health activities, directed at both communities and at individuals. As members of the healthcare team, pharmacists help focus attention on the prevention and management of diseases and other health conditions through the promotion of healthy communities, individuals and environments. Pharmacists provide information, advice and education on health awareness, healthy lifestyles and wellness, and disease prevention and management.