



Enquiries to: Liza-Jane McBride
Chief Allied Health Officer
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Queensland

Telephone: [REDACTED]
Our ref: C-ECTF-22/17549
Your ref: AH003270

Queensland Health

Dr Maria Boulton and Dr Brett Dale
President and Chief Executive Officer
AMA Queensland
PO Box 123
RED HILL QLD 4059

Email: amaq@amaq.com.au

Dear Dr Boulton and Dr Dale

Thank you for your letters dated 3 November and 21 November 2022 regarding the North Queensland Community Pharmacy Scope of Practice Pilot (the Pilot), and for meeting with representatives of the Department of Health (the Department) on 28 November 2022.

I appreciate you taking the time to share your concerns with me. I note that a response to your previous correspondence dated 12 September 2022, regarding the Urinary Tract Infection Pharmacy Pilot – Queensland (UTIPP-Q), was sent to your office on 11 October 2022. Information related to many of the questions and concerns you have raised in your correspondence regarding the Pilot and the UTIPP-Q is publicly available; however, the Department is able to provide clarification where additional information is available.

As you are aware, the Department recognises that the Pilot is not a stand-alone solution to address workforce issues and improve access to primary health care in North Queensland. The Palaszczuk Government continues to work with the Commonwealth Government on this issue, including employing an additional 9,000 health care professionals and implementing programs of work to increase access to high-quality care in rural and remote areas. This includes, but is not limited to, the medical and allied health rural generalist pathways, virtual emergency department and Hospital in the Home programs, and an extensive program of capital works to build and upgrade new and existing health care facilities, including primary and urgent care centres.

I understand that the Department undertook considerable research and planning to develop the scope of the Pilot. Key stakeholders, including the Australian Medical Association Queensland (AMAQ) and other medical organisations, provided feedback as part of the Steering Reference Group, and this feedback was considered when determining the scope of the Pilot. The Pharmacy Board of Australia was also included in the Stakeholder Reference Group and has maintained engagement with the Department regarding the Pilot. The Pharmacy Board recently announced a project to develop accreditation standards for education and training programs for pharmacist prescribers, which is scheduled for completion in December 2023.

The conditions included in the Pilot have been adapted to the Australian health care context from both established services and other pilots conducted in Australia and internationally. The Department has undertaken considerable work to develop comprehensive clinical practice guidelines and clinical protocols for the Pilot Services. These documents detail the parameters of the pharmacist intervention or service, including requirements for assessment and investigations, therapeutic and non-therapeutic management, monitoring and review, and clear points of referral and collaboration with general practitioners and other members of the multidisciplinary primary health care team. Once the guidelines and protocols have been reviewed and validated, they will be published and made available to health professionals in North Queensland.

Queensland Health recognises that all consumers reserve the right, and have the capacity, to decide how and where they access health care. While the Pilot will enable improved access to care, I appreciate that some consumers will choose to see a medical practitioner rather than a pharmacist participating in the North Queensland Pilot. All patients will be informed of the total costs of Pilot services and must provide consent to participate in the Pilot.

The Department of Health has engaged the Queensland University of Technology and James Cook University to develop and provide the post-graduate education and training for participating pharmacists. The education and training package includes a prescribing education and training program for non-medical practitioners, a clinical education and training program covering clinical assessment, diagnosis and management of the conditions included in the Pilot, and accredited professional development in vaccination and medicine administration. The Learning in Practice (120 hours) is one component of the prescribing education and training course, in addition to coursework, lectures and residential workshops.

A comprehensive evaluation of the Pilot will be undertaken by an external provider, aligned to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare dimensions of system performance (domains of accessibility, continuity, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, appropriateness and safety). More information on the evaluation will be available once the Department has engaged an external provider and the evaluation plan has been developed. Complaints made to Queensland Health will be investigated in accordance with established complaint processes; however, as with any complaint made to Queensland Health or an appropriate regulatory body, sufficient information must be provided to enable thorough and timely investigation.

I encourage the AMAQ to remain engaged with and contribute to implementation and evaluation planning of the Pilot. To nominate two representatives to participate in the expert review of clinical practice guidelines and protocols, please email [REDACTED], and include the name, email address and phone number of your nominated medical officers, as well as their area of speciality, if appropriate, and the location of their practice, by **16 December 2022**.

Should you require further information, the Department of Health's contact is Ms Liza- Jane McBride, Chief Allied Health Officer, Clinical Excellence Queensland, on telephone [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Shaun Drummond
Director-General
12/12/2022