

21 July 2010

Media release

A simple and achievable approach to CPD for all pharmacists

A professional career requires lifelong learning. At each career stage pharmacists will develop skills, knowledge and attitudes through formal and informal education and integrate these into practice. This is an opportunity to undertake activities that are both enjoyable and useful.

Under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme and national law, there are continuing professional development (CPD) requirements for all ten health professions. All pharmacy organisations have provided input to make this workable for our profession. Guidance on the new national approach is available on the Pharmacy Board of Australia (PBA) website.

However, many pharmacists are asking **“what does this mean for me in my pharmacy practice”?**

The APLF member organisations are keen to reassure all pharmacists that these CPD requirements are achievable, regardless of where they live or whether they can easily attend face to face sessions.

So, firstly consider some facts.

1. The PBA is inclusive and realises that pharmacists work in a variety of practice and geographic environments.

The PBA says that: *“Practice means any role, whether remunerated or not, in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a pharmacist in their profession. For the purposes of this registration standard, practice is not restricted to the provision of direct clinical care. It also includes working in a direct nonclinical relationship with clients; working in management, administration, education, research, advisory, regulatory or policy development roles; and any other roles that impact on safe, effective delivery of services in the profession and/or use their professional skills.”*

2. The PBA is encouraging all pharmacists to think about their area of pharmacy practice and their individual CPD learning needs by:
 - considering competence and then honestly assessing the gaps that exist;
 - creating a plan to fulfil the knowledge / skills gaps;
 - implementing the plan by undertaking the necessary learning; and then evaluating and reviewing the impact of the learning activity on practice.
3. CPD is not just about undertaking courses, as new situations that arise in everyday practice can often represent a great opportunity for CPD. This is often being referred to as ‘unscheduled learning’. Recording the incident and subsequent actions to rectify a problem/correct an error/introduce a new procedure can also be CPD.



4. The PBA has adopted a three level CPD approach and has assigned varying **CREDITS** to each level. The new PBA system of **CREDITS** assigns different values for the hours in each of the three CPD activity Groups. The first CPD annual return to the PBA will be due in September 2011 and twenty credits will need to be described, with only ten credits able to come from Group 1.

How could this work for you?

Mary, a pharmacist, reviews a prescription. She could be in a community pharmacy, looking at a hospital medication chart, in an aged care home or during a home medicines review. She finds a new medicine and using references, she quickly reviews the recommended dosage ranges, contraindications and interactions. This situation has prompted Mary to **undertake a Group 1 CPD activity – information has been accessed without assessment.**

Mary may also think that she really needs to find out more about this family of new medicines and she makes a note of this in her CPD learning plan. Subsequently, she notices that the National Prescribing Service has provided a review article on this new drug which she reads - **another Group 1 activity.**

When Mary receives her next professional journal, she notices a related article that includes online self-assessment questions, which she undertakes. This is a **Group 2 activity – knowledge or skills improved with assessment.**

Mary is required to provide two lectures to her workmates each year as part of in-house weekly continuing education. This new medicine is being used more widely now, so she develops a lecture and presents this to her colleagues (in the pharmacy or for nurses in the aged care home etc.). She now feels quite knowledgeable about the topic and is happy that she was able to answer all the questions asked by the audience. Preparing and presenting continuing education to others is considered a **Group 3 CPD activity – quality or practice improvement facilitated.**

This simple example describes learning that many pharmacists undertake every day.

The extra steps to meet PBA CPD requirements are mostly about keeping a summary record.

It is useful to describe any 'learning needs' that underpin the activity and then reflect on the 'value' achieved in improved knowledge and skills. In addition, pharmacists should keep a CPD portfolio which could include any certificates, flyers, conference materials, handwritten notes or Group 2 assessment question summaries for eventual audit purposes.

Finally, it is important to realise that both accredited and non-accredited CPD activities may be undertaken. It is the responsibility of the pharmacist to assess potential activities for suitability and relevance and to determine whether individual learning needs will be addressed by undertaking these activities.

Pharmacists can contact their pharmacy organisation for help. Most organisations are working hard to assist their members to progress smoothly through this change using materials on their websites, including frequently asked questions. Many CPD opportunities are being provided (through web based programs and biomedical journals), as well as online recording systems that guide the process and also maintain records that are suitable for PBA requirements.

Some helpful materials to get you started are available at:

Pharmacy Board of Australia <http://www.pharmacyboard.gov.au/>
SHPA <http://cpd.shpa.org.au/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=SHPACP/ccms.r>
PSA <http://www.psa.org.au/site.php?id=5150>
ACP <http://www.acp.edu.au/site.php?id=480>

For more information: Mr Grant Martin, Chair, APLF Mobile: 0458 149 995

The APLF members are: The Australian Association of Consultant Pharmacy; the Council of Pharmacy Schools of Australia and New Zealand; the Australian College of Pharmacy; The Pharmacy Guild of Australia; the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia; the Australian Pharmacy Council; Pharmaceutical Defence Limited and the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia.