CWH would welcome “Colesworth”

DISCOUNT Pharmacy group, Chemist Warehouse (CWH), claims the Pharmacy Location Rules are stymieing competition and it would welcome the entry of supermarket giants Coles and Woolworth’s into the market.

The discounter’s Chief Operating Officer, Mario Tascone, told The Age, the current Pharmacy Location Rules were outdated and put “handcuffs” on the group’s ability to compete.

“It’s the only protected industry in Australia and in the year 2019, these rules make no sense,” he said.

“We’d like the Government to allow pharmacies to discount the [Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)] co-payment to whatever level they want.”

Tascone voiced his support for deregulating the community pharmacy sector, allowing supermarkets and overseas groups to establish pharmacies in Australia.

“It will be highly competitive [if this happened], like any other industry, and the customer wins,” he said.

A Pharmacy Guild of Australia spokesperson dismissed Tascone’s push to dismantle the rules.

“Chemist Warehouse claims to be wearing handcuffs, and yet they appear to have flourished under the current regulations,” the spokesperson said.

Guild National President, George Tambassis, added the rules allowed for new pharmacies to be established “where there is a community need”.

“Modern community pharmacies in Australia are part of the health system – the things they do for patients across medication management and health advice and screening do not belong in Aisle 8 of a supermarket, or next to the alcohol or cigarettes that they sell,” he said.

“Where prices are not fixed under the PBS, there is strong competition and consumers are able to take advantage of this – and they do.

“Pharmacy regulation has also not prevented the proliferation of discount model pharmacies – Chemist Warehouse is proof of that.”

MedAdvisor automates 6CPA claiming

MEDAdvisor has integrated with the Pharmacy Programs Administrator (PPA) Claiming Portal to automate claiming for 6CPA programs through the PlusOne Platform.

The platform removes the need to manually submit via the PPA Portal.

Once pharmacists have completed the one-off registration process, the system will do the remainder of the work.

Automatic claiming for MedsChecks and Diabetes MedsChecks services will be progressively activated across all MedAdvisor network pharmacies over the next few weeks, with other 6CPA programs and Health Outcomes Data entry will be enabled for automatic claiming as soon as they become available.

Robert Read, MedAdvisor Chief Executive Officer, said “we are proud to be the first provider to enable this for our network...our goal is to make medication more manageable for patients.”

Minfos-MIMS integration

MINFOS has collaborated with the Monthly Index of Medical Specialties (MIMS) to incorporate their drug-to-drug and drug-allergy interaction alert modules into the Minfos dispense workflow.

This allows access to MIMS’ clinical information, which can help pharmacists to deliver better patient care.

The feature is now available to all Minfos pharmacies.

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Pharmacist triage success

A PHARMACIST-LED triage pilot at a British general practice clinic is freeing up 34 hours of GP-time each week, and slashing waiting times.

Three months into the year-long trial, the clinic is considering expanding it to provide triage services for its out-of-hours service on Sat mornings, The Pharmaceutical Journal reports.

As part of the program, patients at the St John’s Way Medical Centre in Islington, North London, have been advised to contact the clinic by phone to make an appointment, when they call the GP pharmacist assesses their needs and directs them to an alternative service if they do not need to be seen by a GP.

Prior to the start of the trial the clinic employed two GPs to triage walk-in patients, however, with the pharmacist one GP has been freed up to provide clinical care.

“A three-month review of the project has shown positive results,” a spokesperson for the clinic said.

“We have managed to reduce the waiting time for patients to see a GP on the same day and have also reduced the total number of same-day face-to-face contacts with a GP.”

Islington GP Federation Lead Pharmacist, Soumia Gillam, said the trial’s initial success had prompted consideration of extending the service to the I:HUB out-of-hours GP clinic, noting that more than one-in-five calls to the service related to medication queries, while a further 13% related to minor injuries or suspected urinary tract infections.

“About 40% of those [I:HUB] patients could be managed by a clinical pharmacist,” Gillam said.

“They do not necessarily need to see a GP.”
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