



Community Pharmacy 2025

Framework for Change

Growth pathway: Community health hub



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

www.guild.org.au/cp2025



Community health hub

What is the pathway?

Establish the community pharmacy as a community health hub for delivering a variety of health services using consultation rooms that can be utilised by other health providers such as nurses, psychologists, mental health counsellors, diabetes and asthma educators, occupational therapists, social workers, podiatrists, nutritionists and dieticians who may be contracted on a sessional basis or employed as pharmacy staff. This pathway involves:

- Enabling the pharmacy to become a community health hub
- Demonstrating the viability of transforming into a community health hub
- Partnering with health providers and/or training existing staff to implement a community health hub

Why make the change?

To a varying degree, community pharmacies already contract other health professionals such as maternal nurses and diabetes educators on a sessional basis. With physical retailing under pressure and an increased focus on multidisciplinary care, pharmacy infrastructure can be utilised for broader health services without necessarily entering those markets directly or employing full time staff. Other health professionals working on a sessional basis can complement pharmacists' medicines role, enabling a holistic, health solutions based approach.

The opportunity for pharmacies

Pharmacies can enable a broader shift to health services by reconfiguring retail space into consultation rooms, which are made available to other health professionals on a sessional basis. The focus can be on unmet local health needs in areas of health expertise for the pharmacy (e.g. diabetes, asthma, child health, mental health).

Pharmacies that take this approach can attract patients from outside their normal geographic footprint. Depending on who they partner with, such arrangements can enhance access to the MBS and other revenue streams as well as health products. There is a low cost to building relationships with other health professionals and inviting them to practice in your pharmacy, which will enhance their access to patients and reduce their infrastructure costs.

What happens if I don't make the change?

Patients, especially those with chronic health conditions and co-morbidities, who have to deal with multiple health professionals value the convenience of a 'one stop shop'. The small amount of space/investment required means this is an opportunity that equally can be capitalised upon by other health care providers, who may decide to include pharmacists in their health offering, potentially undermining the core medicines role of your pharmacy.

You are not alone – champion story

Swarup Afsar – Pharmacy 777, Nollamara, WA

The development of pharmacy health hubs gives community pharmacies the opportunity to take their delivery of professional services to the next level of patient care.

Pharmacy 777 sets itself apart by focusing on imparting knowledge rather than selling products. Speaking to local doctors, Swarup identified an unmet local need for mental health services, so he hired a counsellor and psychologist and built two consulting rooms. Swarup also hosts mothers' groups and engages with the community outside the pharmacy, visiting schools, bowling clubs and general practices.

"The key part of community pharmacy is community. Every community is different and finding where your pharmacy fits in is essential for developing the health hub that best serves your patients. Everyone walking through your door must be considered as a patient, not a customer."



Pathway change plan



Market research

This pathway is received favourably by patients. Some 34 per cent strongly support and only one-in-ten strongly oppose. Nearly half (47 per cent) would 'probably' or 'definitely' use pharmacies in this way. Patients are attracted to GPs operating out of community health hubs and there is considerable support for providing access to various allied health professionals.

Quick wins

Consult with local health professionals and community organisations to identify areas of unmet health needs. Find partners to help deliver health services out of your pharmacy or consider investing in training your existing staff.

What can I do now?

- Contact your local health providers, including GPs, allied health professionals, community organisations and Primary Health Networks (PHNs) to gain insight and understanding
- Identify health needs and gaps in your community, including by talking to your patients
- Undertake some initial planning. Establish a budget. Talk to your team and ensure they are aware of your plans and identify any need for additional training
- Identify and meet with local health professionals to ascertain interest in potential sessional work
- If necessary, look to build a consultation room, ensuring it meets the relevant clinical practice requirements
- Focus in health areas that will add value to your existing services/products or will broaden your existing offering
- Make sure your staff are aware of the services so they can advise patients. Set up booking and referral systems
- Develop joint marketing activities with your health partners to promote the new services in the community

Who do I talk to?

Talk to your patients and local health professionals who could derive mutual benefit from working with you. If your pharmacy is QCPP accredited, utilise the relevant QCPP business plans and checklists.

Scripts in



**The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia**

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia

Level 2, 15 National Circuit, Barton ACT 2600

PO Box 310, Fyshwick, ACT 2609, Australia

P: +61 2 6270 1888 F: +61 2 6270 1800

www.guild.org.au