



APC MEDIA RELEASE

MENTAL HEALTH CARE CAPABILITIES FOR PHARMACISTS

The Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) and the Committee of the Heads of Pharmacy Schools in Australia and New Zealand (CHPSANZ) have undertaken the development of a statement which sets out the expected mental health care capabilities of pharmacists in Australia. They were assisted in this undertaking by a Steering Committee comprising representatives from pharmacy professional organisations. This statement is based on the units and elements set out in the *Competency Standards for Pharmacists in Australia 2003*. It extends selected performance criteria and evidence guides to make them relevant to mental health care. The Statement has been developed in response to an Australian Government commitment to improve access to mental health services and to provide additional support to patients with mental illness, their families and their carers.

The statement will be used by CHPSANZ to guide the content and conduct of both the pharmacy programs at Australian universities and the programs undertaken by pharmacy graduates in their subsequent intern year, thus supporting the '*Mental Health in Tertiary Curricula*' initiative contained in the *National Action Plan on Mental Health 2006-2011*. It will also be used by the APC in the processes associated with the accreditation of pharmacy schools and intern training programs in Australia and New Zealand. The Capability Statement is also designed to inform pharmacists, other health professionals, and the Australian community more generally of the roles expected of pharmacists in the provision of mental health care.

The document describes the required knowledge and methods of application to enable pharmacists in Australia to be capable of providing appropriate care to patients with mental illness. It assumes that pharmacists are competent to practise pharmacy in the manner described in the *Competency Standards for Pharmacists in Australia 2003*. Importantly, this Capability Statement is a supplementary document to the *Competency Standards for Pharmacists in Australia 2003*, and is not intended to replace those Standards but instead seeks to provide direction and information as to how the Competency Standards should be applied in the mental health care context. The capabilities are applicable to a range of practice settings including community pharmacy, hospital pharmacy and in consultant/clinical pharmacy roles.

The full final report is available on the APC website <http://www.pharmacycouncil.org.au/>
We welcome your suggestions and comments. Please direct these to admin@pharmacycouncil.org.au

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