



Australian Health Care Reform Alliance

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The future of pharmacy



Currently pharmacies are subject to a number of regulations limiting their ownership to qualified pharmacists and placing location restrictions on the opening of new pharmacies. These rules restrict competition within the pharmacy market by protecting existing pharmacies from competition from non-pharmacist retailers and newly qualified pharmacists.

The [Harper Review](#) into competition policy has found that restrictions undermine the efficiency of the health system through reducing competition in the provision of medicines. It stated that existing restrictions "limit the ability of consumers to choose where to obtain pharmacy products and services, and the ability of providers to meet consumers' preferences."

AHCRA supports [deregulating pharmacy ownership and location rules](#) to increase competition and efficiency within the pharmacy sector. This would lead to increased access to medicines for consumers and greater overall efficiency.

At the same time there may be useful extensions of community pharmacists' roles that would make some elements of testing and care more readily available to consumers. Pharmacists would need to link with consumers' GPs to ensure they are part of each consumer's overall care team.

Pharmacists are highly skilled health professionals who are a vital component of the health system. We need better ways of funding and supporting them to ensure they can use their skills and experience to provide maximum benefit to the community.

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