

Community and Pharmacy Support (CAPS) Group Australia

Media statement

SYDNEY, NSW, AUSTRALIA, September 10, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Community and Pharmacy Support (CAPS) Group is an independent organisation focused on improved access to health for all Australians.



CAPS has received widespread support from various stakeholders, including patients, pharmacy staff, doctors, healthcare professionals, politicians, and the public. This support is grounded in the simple fact that CAPS is unwavering in its pursuit of equitable healthcare for all Australians. CAPS aims to provide cheaper medicines for all patients, not just some.

Following the peaceful rally of 2800 Pharmacists and pharmacy staff organised by CAPS in Canberra, CAPS has written to the Prime Minister about the organisation's required outcomes for this campaign. The objectives are aligned to the organisation's goals to protect patients and customers, secure pharmacy industry jobs and maintain the viability of the community pharmacy industry. We would expect that the Prime Minister would provide a reply to this letter in a reasonable "business-like" time frame. We also call on the government to stop its campaign to discredit the pharmacy industry through labelling us 'liars', scaremongers and 'fearmongers'.

If these highly achievable requirements do not occur, CAPS will take further measures to raise awareness and highlight the policy's shortcomings to the Australian public.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia (PGA) and the government signed an agreement on Friday, 1st September, to commence the negotiations of the 8th Community Pharmacy Agreement. CAPS will ONLY rest once the agreement is in a form where the government meets the three criteria:

1. Patients get access to affordable medications.
2. The highly skilled pharmacy personnel receive job security.
3. Provides pharmacy owners with an agreement that maintains viability, including their responsibilities to financiers.

The material change to the 7th agreement without regard to the pharmacy industry is a catastrophic move made by the government, destroying confidence in the sector and leads to either a community pharmacy winding up or increasing prices.

As expected by CAPS, the policy is NOT achieving its advertised objectives, being half-price medication and freeing up GP appointments.

The reality of the policy has been:

- Patients starting a new medication and not stable patients with chronic conditions are receiving 60-day prescriptions.
- Prescribing for patients with less than 12 months of repeats and, in many cases, no repeats.
- Prescriptions have only sometimes resulted in a half-price prescription for patients i.e. patients pay double for two boxes as they are under the threshold.
- Prescribing many years of supply beyond the validity of the prescription, including double quantities of packs that last much longer than 60 days.

As more patients experience the reality of the policy, it is evident that there will be fewer patients accessing half-price medicine, and there is no indication that prescribing habits are opening more GP appointments.

Understanding the need for a workable solution, CAPS emphasises the urgency for industry certainty. Without it, CAPS will continue advocating for cheaper medicines, industry staff, and family-owned pharmacies, with the possibility of further actions if required.

CAPS Group Australia

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