



Consumers
Health Forum
of Australia

21 June 2012

Executive Officer
Pharmacy Board of Australia
GPO Box 9958
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear Sir/Madam

Consultation on the amendment of the *Code of Conduct for registered health practitioners*

The Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the consultation on the amendment of the *Code of Conduct for registered health practitioners* (the Code).

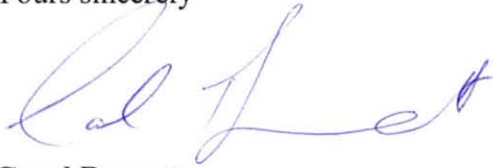
CHF is the national peak body representing the interests of Australian healthcare consumers. CHF works to achieve safe, quality, timely healthcare for all Australians, supported by accessible health information and systems.

CHF welcomes the proposed amendment to the Code, which would see the addition of a paragraph on codes of ethics and the need for pharmacists to be guided by those codes relevant to their practice. This addition is particularly timely given concerns raised by a number of stakeholders, including CHF, following recent revelations about financial arrangements that could call the ethical practice of pharmacists into question. These include a proposed financial arrangement (now withdrawn) between the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and Blackmores, which would have seen pharmacists prompted by dispensing software to recommend the purchase of certain complementary products from Blackmores when specific prescriptions are filled; and financial incentives (not always disclosed to the patient) for enrolling patients in patient support programs funded by pharmaceutical companies.

The community places considerable trust in the pharmacy profession, and pharmacists play an essential role as frontline health professionals who provide expert advice on medicines and healthcare. CHF recognises that the majority of pharmacists practice ethically, but we welcome the additional guidance to be provided to pharmacists about the importance of adhering to a relevant code of ethics.

CHF appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed amendment. If you would like to discuss the issues raised in more detail, please contact CHF Senior Policy Manager, Ms Anna Greenwood.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Carol Bennett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Carol Bennett
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER