Supply of chemotherapy drugs such as Docetaxel – 5.3.13

The Wesley Pharmacy has been involved in the provision of pharmacy services to cancer patients for more than 25 years. We were the first privately owned pharmacy to provide aseptic cytotoxic reconstitution services in Queensland. In 2009, we achieved the significant milestone of becoming the first 100% Australian owned TGA licensed compounding centre for cytotoxic medicines.

(TGA Lic #: MI-2010-LI-03192-3)

The Wesley Pharmacy provides this compounding service to many of Queensland's regional centres including Rockhampton, Gladstone and Mackay.

In discussions with the finance officers of these clinics, it has been clearly indicated that if we were to raise an additional charge for our services, it would become economically untenable for these regional clinics to continue to operate in the cancer care space.

The system is broken.

- The compounding fee paid to pharmacists does not reflect the cost of preparing the infusions.
- The distribution fee paid to pharmacists does not reflect the cost of acquiring the vials required to prepare infusions.
- The dispensing fee does not cover the clerical elements of managing the PBS claiming process, let alone the cost of the pharmacist's time in ensuring that the dose is appropriate.
- The container fee does not cover the cost of the various containers into which the infusions are compounded.

The system has been able to limp along as a result of the difference between PBS list price and actual purchase price on a number of high value items. As a result of the successful implementation of the PBS price disclosure policy this is now at an end.

The solution is simple.

Ensure that the fee structure reflects the true cost of providing care. In our situation this is around $170 per dose. Detailed information to corroborate this claim has been provided to the Department of Health and Aging.

Based on the existing fees being around $70, an additional $100 fee per dose prepared, appropriately indexed will see that the supply chain is not broken.

Australians who suffer from Cancer deserve and need adequately funded treatment.

David Brand BPharm MPS
Operations Manager
The Wesley Pharmacy Group