

Care Alliance Ireland submission to the consultation on the draft revised Code of Conduct for Pharmacists (2018)

There are approximately 360,000 family carers in Ireland, providing care and support for hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities, mental health concerns, long-term illnesses and chronic conditions¹. Many of the people being cared for by family carers in their own homes have significant medical needs, and therefore are likely to be in constant contact with health and social professionals, including community and hospital pharmacists.

Care Alliance Ireland are pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the most recent draft revised Code of Conduct for Pharmacists, published in July 2018. We in Care Alliance Ireland are concerned that nowhere in the Code are family carers specifically acknowledged. This short submission suggests a small change to the Code which would go somewhat towards a clearer articulation of the key triadic relationship between them, the cared for person and pharmacists. This will also support with more cohesive medical care for those patients and care recipients who are often the most vulnerable in our community. It would also validate the role of community pharmacists, and their teams, as key communicators with family carers. The pharmacist team will often have the most regular contact all of health and social care professionals with family carers.

Specific acknowledgement of family carers as 'key care partners'.

The National Carers' Strategy (2012) is the current blueprint for policy and conduct of health & social care professionals with regards to Ireland's family carers. It is worth noting that there are a number of objectives and actions contained within the policy which can, and should, be included and noted within a Code of Conduct for pharmacists.

1.1.1: Promote a better recognition of the role and contribution of carers at a national level

1.2: Include carers in care planning and decision making for those that they care for

We appreciate that there may not be an appropriate place to address these issues within a Code of Conduct, however these actions from the National Carers' Strategy could be particularly integrated in the following drafted principles:

- Principle Three: Communicate Effectively
- Principle Four: Work with Others

¹ Central Statistics Office, 'CSO Releases Irish Health Survey Results'.

'Guiding support for family carers'

We suggest that where patients, colleagues, and other healthcare professionals are specifically referenced, that by including family carers as a named population group, it would reinforce the need for pharmacists to understand the important role they play as key partners in care.

In this regard, our suggestion is; to add to 'Principle Four: Work with others' section the following text, or similar;

"Work with family carers and/or named representative to support the needs, values and preferences of the patient."

Background Information on Care Alliance Ireland

There are approximately 360,000 family carers in the Republic of Ireland. Family carer support is provided by a number of organisations, including those dedicated solely to carer support and others who support carers as part of their response to individuals with specific conditions.

Care Alliance Ireland is the National Network of Voluntary Organisations supporting family carers. Our vision is that the role of family carers is fully recognised and valued by society in Ireland. We exist to enhance the quality of life of family carers. We achieve this by supporting our 85 member organisations in their direct work with family carers through the provision of information, developing research and policy, sharing resources, and instigating opportunities for collaboration.

Our legitimacy derives in part from our membership base which includes a wide range of organisations currently providing services to Ireland's family carers. Our membership is comprised of both large and small, regional and national organisations. We work with organisations in order that they can enhance the information and supports they provide to family carers. We provide them with opportunities to collaborate on initiatives including National Carers Week, a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary Family Carer Research Group, and joint policy submissions. We actively encourage collaboration in all our projects. We provide cohesion to those organisations working to support family carers. We commission relevant research that supports quality interventions in the lives of family carers.

By focusing on these functions we enable more of our member's resources to go directly to coal face services.

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