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Information re the Operation of Private Methadone Clinics - Persons Act 1966

- ① Licences issued by Department of Health - Methadone
 - ② Licence to manufacture Drugs of Addiction - Schedule 8 of the Persons List
 - ③ Licence to supply substances specified in Schedule 8 of the Persons List - wholesale dealing or administration to a patient in a private hospital or nursing home
 - ④ Under these Licences ② and ③ the process of supply of the substances must be carried out on or from designated premises as stated in the Licence Application.
- ② Ownership of the Private Methadone Clinics precludes any interest of a doctor registered to prescribe methadone to patients
- ③ Most owners of the Private Clinics are non medical persons eg. Accountants
In the case of the Barbara Street Clinic P/L in Fairfield Mrs Mary SAMAD, a director of Nursing, was Company Director.
- ④ Private Methadone Clinics charge between AU\$55 - 60 per patient per week depending on the number of TAKE AWAY DOSES supplied.
Usual ratio is FOUR administered doses to THREE Takeaway doses (4:3)
TOTAL revenue per patient per year is AU\$3016.
In the case of the Barbara Street Clinic it employed SIX doctors, including Dr. Samad the husband of Mrs. Mary Samad, prescribed for 419 Patients therefore the TOTAL revenue per week at AU\$58 average per week is AU\$ 24,302 or AU\$1,263,704 per year

NOTE ① Methadone Syrup is supplied FREE by the Commonwealth Government to all Clinics.

- ② Community Pharmacists registered to supply Methadone doses charge patients AU\$ 35 per week and can only supply a maximum of 50 patients.
- ⑤ Take away doses are designated as dispensing under the Pharmacy Act. (N.S.W.) due to the fact that they must be labelled with the name of the patient
 - (i) the dose strength of the Methadone (ii) date of dispensing.
 No takeaway dose can be handed to a patient without the appropriate label.
- ⑥ Only a pharmacist or a person under his/her direct supervision or a medical practitioner in the course of his/her practice can dispense medicines on the prescription of a medical practitioner. Pharmacists can only dispense in premises registered under the Pharmacy Act - see section 27.
- ⑦ Private Methadone Clinics are not or cannot be registered as a pharmacy as they are owned by natural persons or companies.
- ⑧ Even though pharmacists are employed by the clinics to prepare (prepach) takeaway doses on a territorial basis they are not present when the doses are handed to the patients and are not dispensing on registered premises.

STANDING COMMITTEE
17 AUG 2007
on Family and Human Services

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CONCLUSIONS.

- ① Pharmacists are dispensing take away doses on unregistered premises and are not present when the doses are handed to the patients. They are therefore in breach of the Pharmacy Act
- ② The owners of the Private Methadone Clinics are also in breach of the Pharmacy Act due to the fact that dispensing is taking place on Unregistered premises.
- ③ The whole unsatisfactory situation can be overcome by part of the Clinics being registered as a pharmacy, owned by a pharmacist who would be present at all times when take away doses, prepared by the pharmacist or other person under the direct supervision of the pharmacist, are handed to the patient. Payment for the doses would be paid to the pharmacy.

REFERENCES

- ① Commonwealth National Drug Strategy Research Report No. 4
"An Evaluation of Private Methadone Clinics"
Dr. James Bell
Director, Drug and Alcohol Unit N.S.W.
- ② Review of Garbara Street Methadone Clinic Fairfield.
December, 1997 - see pages 1-9 Executive Summary.
- ③ Pharmacy Act NSW.
Part 1. Preliminary
3. Definitions
6 General section 28(1)27. (14)
Part 5 Control of Pharmacies
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