

Union issues clarification on eRx criticism

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Employee pharmacist union the Pharmacists Division of APESMA (PDA) issued a statement yesterday defending its criticism of the proposed funding of eRx Script Exchange in the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement.

The Pharmacy Guild had been critical of a recent article in the Financial Review, based on comments from PDA President Geoff March, which implied that it would gain an unfair advantage from its 50% stake in eRx. The Guild denied this and requested a retraction from the paper.

The union responded yesterday saying that "while it is true there may be a number of companies that will benefit from the funding for electronic prescription transmission, the "eRx Script Exchange" is likely to be the major beneficiary".

According to PDA, the eRx system has successfully signed on the major dispensing and prescribing software companies as eRx vendor partners, with the five largest dispensing software companies - Fred Health, LOTS, Simple Retail, Minfos and Amfac - participating in the project.

The union says that the inclusion of Medical Director software as an eRx vendor partner means that over 17,000 doctors, representing 85 per cent of computerised GPs and over 1,300 Specialists will be able to use the eRx system.

PDA claims that because eRx Script Exchange is 50% owned by the Pharmacy Guild, the Guild has a conflict of interest in negotiating the Agreement.

The Guild last night declined to comment on the latest PDA claims.