

MEDIA RELEASE

Cheaper medicines for chronic health conditions available from today

EMBARGOED until 1 September 2023 – Media release

Millions of Australian consumers with chronic health conditions will be able to access cheaper medicines from today, under the first stage of the Australian Government's new 60-day dispensing policy.

CHF, Australia's national peak body for health consumers, welcomes the new policy as a small but important step in making health care in Australia more affordable, accessible and equitable.

"Being able to buy two months' worth of medicine for the price of a single 30-day prescription will make a real difference for many Australians, to both their hip pocket and their health," said CHF CEO Dr Elizabeth Deveny.

"We congratulate the Government for listening to consumers' concerns about the costs involved in staying well. This is a significant win for health consumers and for health care."

Dr Deveny said the targeted program, to be implemented in three stages over 12 months, will effectively halve the cost of medicines for up to six million Australians with chronic health conditions, and result in savings for individual consumers of up to \$180 every year per medicine.

"Amid growing cost of living pressures, many consumers have been finding it increasingly difficult to stay well, having to choose between the costs of vital medications and other essentials.

"We know that affordability and having a greater supply of medication on hand lead to more people taking their medicines as prescribed, which of course leads to better health outcomes.

“The 60-day supply also saves time and travel costs, particularly for consumers who live in rural and remote communities and have to travel significant distances to the nearest pharmacy.

“Overwhelmingly, consumers have been telling us how important and welcome this initiative is for them.”

Nearly 100 common medicines listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) are included in the first stage of the 60-day dispensing policy. The full list of medicines recommended for longer dispensing intervals will grow to more than 300 over 12 months.

CHF has created a dedicated ‘60dayscripts’ [website](#) with clear information to help people understand the changes and how they will work for them.

“We’re pleased to see that many consumers have already been making use of the resources and we encourage others to visit the website so they can have informed conversations with their doctors and pharmacists about how and when they can access the 60-day scripts,” Dr Deveny said.

“The resources will be regularly updated, and we will be keeping an eye on any barriers to the smooth rollout of the new policy.”

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