

MEDIA RELEASE

25 January 2017

A step towards addressing the pain epidemic

Painaustralia and the Consumers Health Forum of Australia have welcomed Minister for Health Greg Hunt's announcement that \$20 million will be allocated to a new trial program that will help community pharmacists support people with ongoing chronic pain.

CEO of Painaustralia Carol Bennett says the initiative recognises the important role that community pharmacists can play as frontline health professionals and part of the multidisciplinary care team for people living with pain.

"Pain MedsCheck will enhance the ability of community pharmacists to provide assistance to people with chronic pain, who will benefit from medication management, sound advice about appropriate use of medicines, and help with an action plan that focuses on self-management of pain.

"The trial will encourage participating community pharmacists to build relationships with GPs and other health professionals, and this will enhance options for referral and build networks of health professionals with an understanding of pain management."

The CEO of the Consumers Health Forum, Leanne Wells said that there needed to be more coordinated community-based pain management services that were affordable and accessible.

"Pharmacists are trusted health care providers well-placed to review and advise on safe medication use for pain.

"Consumer insights shape better services. We would expect to see consumer involvement in the evaluation of the trial," Ms Wells said.

Ms Bennett says the opportunity for a face-to-face consultation with a community pharmacist when needed will be an important addition to the services currently offered to support people with pain.

"One in five Australians live with ongoing chronic pain, and one in three aged over 65, and we expect the prevalence of pain to increase as our population ages," she said.

"Australia's chronic pain epidemic underlines the pressing need for a national approach to pain management.

"While this is a good first step we need to see consistent and committed effort to supporting and managing chronic pain in Australia."

Media contacts:

Linda Baraciolli 0404 931 031 (Painaustralia)

Mark Metherell 0429 111 986 (CHF)