



RACGP

MEDIA RELEASE WEDNESDAY, 10 APRIL 2019



Consumers Health
Forum OF Australia

Leading health organisations representing GPs and patients call for patient safety to always be put above pharmacy profits

- Many patients don't go to the doctor and do not fill scripts because of cost
- RACGP and CHF describe back down by Government on Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee decision to allow 60-day dispenses for 143 medications as a significant loss for patient safety and access to medicines.
- Pharmacy Guild successfully lobbied Government to rethink its decision.
- RACGP and CHF call on the Pharmacy Guild to prioritise patients.

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Consumers Health Forum (CHF) have joined forces to call on the Federal Government to rethink its decision to put a hold on plans that would enable patients to collect two months of scripts in a single visit to a pharmacy, after successful lobbying by the Pharmacy Guild.

RACGP President Dr Harry Nespolon said the Government's decision not to allow 60-day dispenses for 143 medications was in the best interest of pharmacy owners, not patients.

"We are extremely concerned the Government has backed down on a decision that was in the best interest of Australian patients, after intense lobbying by the Guild," Dr Nespolon said.

"The Guild has lobbied for this change not because they believe it will improve patient safety and convenience, but because they know pharmacy profits may be impacted if 60-day dispensing was implemented.

"We don't want to see a positive initiative for Australian patients dismissed because it doesn't suit the financial interests of one particular lobby group."

CEO of the CHF Leanne Wells said enabling patients to collect two months of scripts --- previously available under restricted access --- in a single visit to a pharmacy would be safe, practical and convenient for patients.



RACGP



Consumers Health
Forum OF Australia

MEDIA RELEASE WEDNESDAY, 10 APRIL 2019

“This policy reversal takes little heed of PBS and the expert, multidisciplinary advice of the PBAC and is counter to undertakings from both sides of politics that PBAC advice will be acted on, Ms Wells said.

“Pharmacy owners derive considerable business as dispensers of PBS medicines. Pharmacists also have widespread community respect. We urge them to display respect for the community and accept the two-month script proposal and recognise the importance of patient convenience and cost savings for patients. The Guild’s action dismisses patient interests and risks eroding optimal access to health care.

“There are built in Quality Use of Medicine safeguards to discourage inappropriate use or waste. Whether patients get a two-month script is subject to the prescribing doctor being satisfied that their medication is warranted,” Ms Wells said.

“The public needs to be aware that when it comes down to pharmacy profits or patient benefits, the patient comes second to the Guild,” RACGP President Dr Harry Nespolon said.

~ends~

Media contacts

Callie Morgan

RACGP, Media Advisor

0439 585 798

callie.morgan@racgp.org.au

Mark Metherell

CHF Media

0429111986

m.metherell@chf.org.au

About the RACGP

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) was established in 1958 and is Australia’s peak general practice representative organisation.

The RACGP has more than 40,000 members working in or towards a career in general practice across metropolitan, regional and rural areas of the country. Nine in every 10 GPs are with the RACGP.

A core objective of the RACGP is to raise awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health needs. As a result, the RACGP established a dedicated Faculty for



RACGP



Consumers Health
Forum OF Australia

MEDIA RELEASE WEDNESDAY, 10 APRIL 2019

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health in 2010 to help 'close the gap'. The Faculty has more than 9,000 members either working in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healthcare sector or who have a passion and interest in this area. The RACGP undertakes a range of activities to ensure the delivery of high quality culturally responsive care and to assist in the growth of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander general practice workforce.

Visit www.racgp.org.au. To unsubscribe from RACGP media releases, [click here](#).

About CHF

The Consumers Health Forum is Australia's leading advocacy organisation on consumer health care issues. Its members include many national patient and health NGOs. CHF works to achieve safe, good quality, timely healthcare for all Australians, supported by the best health information and systems the country can afford.