

## Real-time monitoring for prescription medicines will save lives

The commitment from the government to deliver a national real-time monitoring system for prescription medicines will improve the safe use of medicines and save lives said Leanne Wells the CEO of Consumers Health Forum of Australia.

“We welcome the announcement today of a commitment to fund the national roll out of a real-time prescription monitoring system. We know some people misuse prescription medicines and that this misuse leads to harm and, in too many cases, death. Anything which reduces the harm and so saves lives is in the interests of the whole community” says Ms Wells.

“Prescription medicines are an important part of a modern health system and, used appropriately, contribute to good health outcomes. Many people use prescription painkillers and other types of medicines legitimately and safely.

“However we know that when some prescription medications are not used appropriately they can lead to harm. “Deaths due to misuse of pharmaceutical prescription opioids is a major public health issue”.

“This new system will provide instant alerts to pharmacists and doctors if patients are shopping around to build up their supplies of prescription only medicines. It is a very important step to assisting pharmacists and doctors to identify patients who may be drug dependent or at risk of becoming drug dependent so that they can be supported to address their addiction, rather than be at risk of further harm”.

“A real time monitoring system is the least disruptive approach to addressing this problem. It allows consumers who are using their medicines properly to retain access and get the health benefits whilst identifying those who are misusing them and restricting their access”.

“We welcome that this is a national and mandated system and that it will be developed in close collaboration with the States and territories” said Ms Wells.

“It needs to be accompanied by additional resources and services to assist people who have misused prescription drugs to deal with their addiction. We have a responsibility as a community to support people to overcome drug addiction”.

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## Consumers shaping health