



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW LEADS NATIONAL BID TO SEE CHRONIC PAIN RECOGNISED AS A DISEASE

NSW Health Minister Jillian Skinner today led a move by the states, territories and the Commonwealth to have pain recognised as a chronic disease.

Mrs Skinner told the Standing Council on Health (SCOH) meeting in Sydney that this important step would improve treatment and access to services for the one in five Australians who suffer chronic or persistent pain in their lifetime.

“It is estimated that 80 per cent of people who suffer from chronic pain miss out on treatment that could improve their health and quality of life.

“Recognising pain as a chronic disease will bring it into line with other diseases and validate it as a disease in its own right, not just a secondary disease or a symptom of something else,” Mrs Skinner said.

“This recognition is important so that patients are identified earlier and access the appropriate care they need.”

Chronic pain costs the Australian economy an estimated \$34 billion per annum and is the nation’s third most costly health problem.

The NSW Government has committed \$26 million over four years to a Pain Management Plan to expand the number of pain clinics in NSW, notably in rural areas, increase the number of expert pain management clinicians, increase research and support the effective management of pain in the community.

“My discussions with patients, their families and carers - as well as with the clinicians who specialise in pain management - has left me determined to achieve a nationally-consistent approach to improving outcomes for people with chronic or persistent pain.

“Today I asked federal, state and territory health ministers to band together and refer this to the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council. I am very pleased there was consensus that this should be done,” she said.

To view the NSW Government Pain Management Plan, go to http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2012/pdf/nsw_pain_management_plan_.pdf