



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW FRONT OPENS IN FIGHT AGAINST CHRONIC PAIN

The NSW Government has opened a new front in the fight against chronic pain, branding 1.7 million pharmacy prescription repeat folders with details of a website which offers support for sufferers.

Health Minister Jillian Skinner said 1700 pharmacies across NSW will this week begin distributing repeat folders branded with the Pain Management Network website, which offers practical advice and resources to manage pain and prevent its escalation.

The website has had over 82,000 views since it was launched by the NSW Government's Agency for Clinical Innovation in March this year.

The campaign coincides with National Pain Week, which starts today and continues until Sunday.

"Chronic pain affects one in five Australians, reducing the capacity of sufferers to fully engage with all aspects of their daily life," Mrs Skinner said.

"The toll it takes on the individual can be enormous and the burden it places on the health system is great.

"The NSW Government is committed to support people living with chronic pain. In 2012, we released the *NSW Pain Management Plan* and committed \$26 million over four years to enhance specialist pain services and expand the number of pain clinics in NSW, most notably in rural areas.

"This year we have launched the Pain Management Network website and made a collection of pain management books available to 70 public libraries across NSW.

"And now, in partnership with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, we are taking the pain management message right to the source," Mrs Skinner said.

When a prescription is filled at a pharmacy and repeat scripts are to be provided, the pharmacist places the repeats in a small folder which the customer takes away.

Pharmacists will this week start to directly target people who have a script filled for pain medication or a pain-related condition.

"Community pharmacies have long had an important role to play in supporting people living with chronic pain by providing access to quality use of medicines, professional advice and early intervention services," Mrs Skinner said.

“Those folders - 1.7 million of them - provide a unique opportunity to send the pain management message into homes across NSW - and not just any homes but those in which we know there is someone living in pain,” Mrs Skinner said.

“This is a creative way to target people who are living with chronic pain and who would benefit from support and advice, not only medication.”

The Pain Management Network website was developed by the Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI), which is one of the six pillars of NSW Health. Visitors to the site can access:

- Interactive learning and self-management modules for adolescents with chronic pain.
- Online resources that promote self-management to help people to retrain their brain’s response to chronic pain.
- Inspirational videos of old and young people sharing their experience of how adopting an evidence-based approach to pain changed their lives.
- Practical tools and resources to help people with chronic pain improve daily sleep and mood; guidance on the role of medication and a healthy lifestyle.
- A toolkit for health professionals that includes: assessment and management tools for doctors and professionals working in the community, factsheets for patients and information on NSW Pain Clinics.

To visit the *ACI Pain Management Network*, go to:

www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/chronic-pain

To view the NSW Government Pain Management Plan, go to

http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2012/pdf/nsw_pain_management_plan_.pdf