



Mike Baird
Premier of NSW
Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIAN-FIRST MEDICAL CANNABIS TRIAL BEGINS IN NSW

NSW continues to position itself as a world leader in cannabis research with the announcement of Australia's first medical cannabis trial for terminally ill adults by Premier Mike Baird and Minister for Medical Research Pru Goward today.

This trial is part of the NSW Government's \$9 million commitment to support medical cannabis clinical trials.

Mr Baird said the first trial will play a critical role in helping to better understand what role medical cannabis can play in alleviating symptoms and pain in terminally ill patients.

"We do not want patients or carers having to play pharmacist - that is why it is so important to explore the safest and most effective ways we can deliver compassionate care and improve the quality of life," Mr Baird said.

"Our trials will help to position NSW at the forefront of world-class research in this area and explore how we can complement the existing palliative care treatments and therapies patients receive."

Ms Goward said this first trial will be conducted by a research team led by the University of New South Wales' Chief Investigator Associate Professor Meera Agar.

"Professor Agar has led several important research studies into the management of patients with terminal illness and together with her team has many years of combined experience; this trial could not be in more experienced hands," Ms Goward said.

Associate Professor Agar said the trial will evaluate two types of cannabis products - vaporised leaf cannabis and a pharmaceutical.

"It will be undertaken in two parts, and will assess the potential ability of cannabis to alleviate distressing symptoms including fatigue, low appetite, altered taste and smell for food, low mood, weight loss, nausea, insomnia and pain relief," Professor Agar said.

“This will add to the existing body of evidence based research to help better understand and evaluate the potential benefits that medical cannabis products may have for terminally ill patients.”

The first part of the trial, which will be conducted at the Calvary Mater Newcastle Hospital will enrol approximately 30 patients in order to answer the following questions:

- Can a potential cannabis product be successfully given to patients by inhaling it as a vapour?
- Is the potential cannabis product well tolerated by patients, that is, does it cause any unwanted side effects?
- What is the ideal dose of the potential cannabis product and how often should it be given?

The next step will be for the research team to seek review and approval of the trial by a Human Research Ethics Committee.

Patients will begin treatment in early 2016 with initial results expected by the end of 2016.

Once the results of part one are known, part two may expand the trial to a broader range of patients across metropolitan and regional hospitals.

For more information about the trial please visit:

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/cannabis>

Any enquiries about the trial can be addressed to:

cannabistrial@doh.health.nsw.gov.au or Cannabis Trials, NSW Ministry of Health, Locked Mail Bag 961, North Sydney, NSW 2059.

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