



Pru Goward

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Medical Research

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Minister for Women

Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 10 February 2016

NSW WELCOMES PROGRESS ON NATIONAL SCHEME FOR CONTROLLED CULTIVATION OF MEDICINAL CANNABIS

NSW Minister for Medical Research Pru Goward has congratulated the Commonwealth Government on introducing legislation to establish a national licensing scheme for the controlled cultivation of cannabis for medical and related scientific purposes into federal parliament today.

“NSW is leading the charge on medicinal cannabis research and innovation – building an evidence base to support the provision of safe and effective treatments to patients in need,” Ms Goward said.

“We have appreciated the opportunity to provide input into the development of this important legislation, which will create a consistent national regulatory approach to controlled cannabis cultivation for medical and related scientific purposes.

“The NSW Government will seek authorisation from the Commonwealth to undertake research to fill knowledge gaps about growing medicinal cannabis.”

The NSW Government has committed \$9 million to three world-leading clinical trials that will examine the use of cannabis and cannabis products in providing relief from a range of debilitating or terminal illnesses.

The first of the trials – focusing on enhancing the quality of life of terminally-ill cancer patients, particularly by improving appetite and appetite-related symptoms – is due to get underway at Newcastle’s Calvary Mater Hospital next month.

The Sydney Children’s Hospitals Network will lead the second trial, a major new research program for cannabis-based medicines in children with severe, drug resistant childhood epilepsy. Late last year the NSW Government signed an agreement with GW Pharmaceuticals which will see a novel cannabis product used for the trial.

The agreement with GW Pharmaceuticals also enables a compassionate access scheme for cannabidiol-based product *Epidiolex* to help those children too sick to participate in clinical trials. The compassionate access scheme is expected to begin in March 2016.

Details of the third trial for adults with chemotherapy-induced vomiting, where

standard treatment has proven ineffective will be announced shortly.

The clinical trials will be monitored by the \$12-million Centre for Medicinal Cannabis Research & Innovation – headed up by its Executive Director, NSW Chief Scientist & Engineer, Professor Mary O’Kane, AC.

The Centre has also been charged with drawing on local and international research to further our formal understanding of medicinal cannabis, educating the community, helping stakeholders navigate regulatory processes, and supporting innovation.

“This is about providing evidence-based research, and evaluating through the clinical trials the benefits of medicinal cannabis,” Professor O’Kane said.

NSW continues to confirm its place as a leader in medicinal cannabis research across the country and the world.