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Change in Codeine Access Highlights Need for National Pain Strategy

The change to current access arrangements for low-dose codeine has implications for pharmacists, GPs and consumers including people using codeine medications for chronic pain.

Pharmacists will be able to recommend alternative medicines however these will not always be helpful to many people, while options for non-pharmacological treatments (allied health) are not available in many areas and may not be affordable because of inadequate Medicare and Private Health rebates and distance from services.

"This is a perfect opportunity for the Federal Government to show leadership on a national pain strategy," said Painaustralia CEO Lesley Brydon.

"The problem of chronic pain and over-reliance on painkillers will not disappear by removing a group of medications from over-the-counter sales.

We need to ensure people with chronic pain are being supported with best-practice care nationally."

The move also emphasises the need for real-time prescription monitoring across Australia and we welcome moves by the government to do this.

[MedsASSIST](#), developed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia to monitor sales of medicines containing codeine and help reduce misuse, has shown the potential of a recording system aligned with appropriate pain management support pathways.

MedsASSIST [has been supported by the Minister for Health Greg Hunt](#), who intervened to keep it operational until 1 February 2018, after the Guild had

Painaustralia AGM 2017

Date & time: 23 May 2017,
4:00-6:00 pm

Venue: Corrs Chambers Westgarth
Level 17, 8-12 Chifley Square
(Cnr Elizabeth and Hunter
Streets), Sydney

All welcome.

RSVP: admin@painaustralia.org.au
by 15 May 2017

MedsASSIST

Informing Medicine Decisions

[Click here for more details](#)



The Pharmacy
Guild of Australia

SA Statewide Pain Plan: Consumers Will Play A Role

Consumers will play an important role in shaping South Australia's statewide pain plan, with consumer advocates at the ready to input into important decisions that will directly affect the community.

Consistent with the shift towards consumer-centred healthcare, consumer representatives have taken an active role in discussions in the first meeting of the Statewide Chronic Pain Implementation Committee, held last month.

"Consumer engagement and education will be one of the important elements of South Australia's new model of care for chronic pain services," said Dr Tim Semple, Pain Specialist and Chair of the committee.

"We want to achieve a whole-of-health approach that involves GPs, primary health organisations and consumers, not just the tertiary sector.

"Research has shown that medical care for chronic illness such as chronic pain, is rarely effective in the absence of adequate self-care.

"Ultimately it's about empowering people to self-manage their pain and giving them the right supports at the primary care level with access to a tertiary service when needed."



Mary Wing

Mary Wing, who leads the Adelaide Pain Support Group and has a Post Graduate Diploma in Chronic Condition Management along with education and experience in Stanford Chronic Disease Self Management programs, brings her wealth of experience to the table.

"Education is an important element of any healthcare strategy. If consumers can be educated in self-care, they are more likely to have less fear and feel more confident, leading to better outcomes," she said.

"Peer support is also a vital element that is often underestimated. Engaging with others who are on the same journey helps relieve feelings of isolation, provides emotional support and can help people achieve their pain management goals."

Dr Tim Semple and his team will be working on delivering the statewide plan by the end of 2018.

Better Care for Osteoarthritis Sufferers in Victoria

Victoria will soon benefit from the release of a new Victorian Model of Care for Osteoarthritis, which was completed last month.

The Victorian MoC for osteoarthritis of the hip and knee recommends an increased emphasis on care in the community, through public and private musculoskeletal clinical service centres in metropolitan and regional areas.

This is consistent with recommendations from Western Australian Models of Care and Arthritis Australia's Time to Move Strategy.

Informed by an expert committee of external advisors and health organisations including Painaustralia, the MoC aligns closely with evidence-based pain management and draws from the latest insights from pain science research.

The MoC recommends non-medicine and non-surgery support, including consumer education about pain and self-management strategies; support for physical activity and exercise; and guidance for weight loss (if required).

Project leaders Musculoskeletal Physiotherapist Carolyn Page, from St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne, and Associate Professor Andrew Briggs, from Curtin University in Perth and the Victorian Musculoskeletal Clinical Leadership Group, are pleased with the result.

"We had a lot of support from stakeholders in developing the Victorian model of care," they said.

"Prioritising osteoarthritis care and developing a statewide model of care represents an important step towards more effective delivery of persistent pain services."

After by Nikki Gemmell

Award-winning author Nikki Gemmell recently addressed a Pain Management Research Institute (PMRI) Ernst & Young function, about her mother's journey with chronic pain.

Elayn Gemmell faced a future of uncertainty and fear, invisible without her beauty or independence, and dealing with chronic pain and an addiction to painkillers.

Her eventual death inspired her daughter Nikki to write the book *After*. In it she examines in painfully honest detail a situation facing many elderly and chronically ill people around the world.

She has since told her story on [ABC's Australian Story](#), which includes an interview with the Director of the Pain Management Research Institute Professor Paul Glare.

To purchase the book online [click here](#)

Hunters Hill Private Hospital Leading the Way

Hunters Hill Private Hospital is proving community-based support can be an effective way to treat and manage osteoarthritis.

Its [Osteoarthritis Management Program](#) has been operating for just over a year and has treated 132 patients.

Specialising in knee and hip osteoarthritis, the multidisciplinary program aims to help patients regain quality of life by reducing joint pain and stiffness and improving function.

Patients receive input from rheumatologists and physiotherapists plus a dietician, occupational therapist and social worker, to help them focus on non-surgical management of their condition.

The program is led by Rheumatologists Professor David Hunter and Doctor Shirley Yu and is based on similar programs at Royal North Shore Hospital and Ryde Hospital in Sydney.

Professor Hunter is a strong advocate for non-surgical management of osteoarthritis and has been involved in [research](#) that underpins the Prima Health Solutions Healthy Weight for Life Program, which showed a correlation between weight loss and symptom improvement in knee osteoarthritis.

"It is a privilege to be able to provide people suffering from osteoarthritis with real opportunities to help them manage their disease," he said.

"Changing behaviour, particularly around weight loss and exercise, is challenging however when patients are allowed to interact with health professionals to help motivate this change it can become a reality."

Painaustralia CEO Lesley Brydon says Australia needs more community-based programs, and not just for osteoarthritis.

"The National Pain Strategy identifies community-based support as an important part of a successful multi-tiered approach to pain management services," she said.

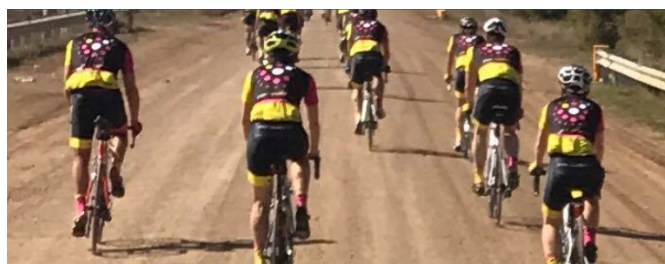
"Programs such as the Hunters Hill Osteoarthritis Management Program show how multidisciplinary pain management programs in the community can lead to improvements in health and wellbeing and reductions in demand for surgery.

"This kind of program could be adapted for other chronic conditions including other forms of chronic pain."

Riders Raise \$80,000 for Chronic Pain Educators

The seven-day Pain Revolution ride from Melbourne to Adelaide has raised more than \$80,000 for chronic pain educators to be established in regional areas.

The ride, which concluded on 9 April 2017, the first day of the Australian Pain Society conference, saw 22 riders and 2 ride guides tackle the gruelling 870 kilometre ride.



Led by some of Australia's expert pain scientists and clinicians, the riders stopped along the way to present a number of [events](#) including public forums and professional seminars.

The ride was the brainchild of Professor Lorimer Moseley from the University of South Australia.

"Our goal is to train and support local pain coaches to teach evidence-based self-management strategies and to work collaboratively with local clinicians," he said.

"We want to create a framework for community-based pain education in the region that can be replicated in other communities."

For more information visit www.painrevolution.org

Donations can be made at www.everydayhero.com.au until the end of April.



New Campaign Highlights Hidden Harms of Pharmaceuticals

A [new campaign](#) prepared by the Alcohol and Drug Foundation will highlight the risks associated with use of potentially addictive medications such as opioids and benzodiazapines.

Beware of the hidden harms of pharmaceuticals.

The potential harms associated with long-term use of opioids for chronic pain are widely recognised. It can lead to increased pain sensitisation, cognitive impairment, symptoms of depression, and addiction.

However, many patients are unaware of these risks, and would benefit from more education to help them make informed choices about their health and wellbeing.

Given the right support, the majority of people with chronic pain will find more effective symptom management with a combination of other strategies.

There are some people, though, for whom opioids can be used successfully without negative side effects, as part of a multidisciplinary approach to pain management, and people who use them responsibly are unnecessarily stigmatised.

“While it is important to educate the community about the risks associated with long-term use of opioids, campaigns such as these must not further stigmatise patients who use opioids appropriately to enable them to live functional lives,” says Painaustralia CEO Lesley Brydon.

Free Pain Management Program in Cantonese

NSW Health in association with the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation is offering a free pain management program in Sydney for Cantonese speaking people.

The program will be delivered in Cantonese in May and June this year and will consist of two hours every week over six weeks. It is aimed at adults aged 18 and over who live with chronic pain.

A questionnaire will need to be completed prior to participation to determine suitability for the course. For a copy of the questionnaire please contact Theresa Chow on 02 8759 4120 (Monday, Thursday, Friday).

National Suicide Prevention Plan Announced

COAG has announced that the 5th National Mental Health Plan will be upgraded to a National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan.

In a first for Australia, it will recognise suicide as a significant public health issue and help ensure a coordinated national response.

Peak bodies Suicide Prevention Australia and Lifeline Australia have welcomed the move, which comes as the number of suicide deaths reach a 10-year high.

Importantly, they note that mental health is not the only reason for suicide.

Numerous studies have identified high rates of depression and suicide ideation in people with chronic pain, who are up to twice as likely to suicide than people without chronic pain. (Tang & Crane 2006)

In Australia, a 2006 study by the Department of Health and Ageing found physical health problems are implicated in one in five suicides.

Painaustralia plans to have input into this important initiative. For more information [click here](#).

Join Painaustralia

If your organisation cares about people in pain and wants to make a difference, please consider becoming a member of Painaustralia.

Our capacity to influence government policy and improve understanding and management of pain is directly related to the strength of our membership network. Your support could make all the difference.

Membership details can be accessed at www.painaustralia.org.au or you can email

Support Us

Your donation will help Painaustralia continue to advocate for better healthcare for Australians who live with chronic pain. Your support could make all the difference.

DONATE NOW

Congratulations Liesl!

Congratulations to Painaustralia Ambassador Liesl Tesch AM who has secured the seat of Gosford for the Labor party in the recent by-election.

Liesl is a seven-time paralympian and the first NSW MP to use a wheelchair. She delights in the challenge of working to make NSW Parliament even more accessible for people with disabilities.



Liesl Tesch AM, Painaustralia Ambassador

With her experience as a teacher in the community as well as her community spirit, she will no doubt make her mark politically for the people she represents.

And as someone who lives with chronic neuropathic pain, due to her spinal cord injury, Liesl brings her compassion and understanding about this condition to her work in parliament.

"I am extremely honoured to have been chosen to represent the people of the seat of Gosford and am very much looking forward to this next step," she said.

#auspain2017

The Australian Pain Society's Annual Scientific Meeting [Expanding Horizons](#) held in Adelaide 9-12 April was a resounding success, attracting around 600 participants.

Now in its 37th year it provides a unique opportunity for pain researchers and clinicians to improve their knowledge and expand their networks.

As always there was an impressive line up of speakers, including three international speakers Professor Stephen Hunt from University College in London, Professor Judith Turner from the University of Washington and Dr Sean Mackey from Stanford University.

If you were unable to attend #auspain2017 you can obtain copies of recorded sessions from [Evertechnology](#).

Look After Your Dragon

When Denis Tebbutt was asked by his friend Michael Gill to join him in developing an internet community to help people with autoimmune disorders, he was still a high-flying businessman.

Ironically, not long after, he was diagnosed with arthritis in his backbone and a protruding disc. His GP of 20 years suggested surgery, cortisone injections or managing it with prescription painkillers should it become unbearable.

Shocked that they were his only options, he decided to investigate acupuncture, which he had used for sports injuries in the past.

The Chinese doctor he consulted put him on a two-week program of restricted diet, Chinese medicine, daily massage and regular acupuncture. By the sixth day, the pain had eased significantly.

He has since completed a multidisciplinary pain management program at Greenwich Hospital and has learned how to manage his pain on a daily basis with a combination of healthy diet, regular gym-based exercise, relaxation techniques and mild medication.

Mr Tebbutt is now convinced about the effectiveness of a holistic approach to pain management and along with Mr Gill, has just launched Dragon Claw into the online market.

"People with chronic pain need to recognise they have a dragon within them, and if they don't look after it properly, it will flare up," he said.

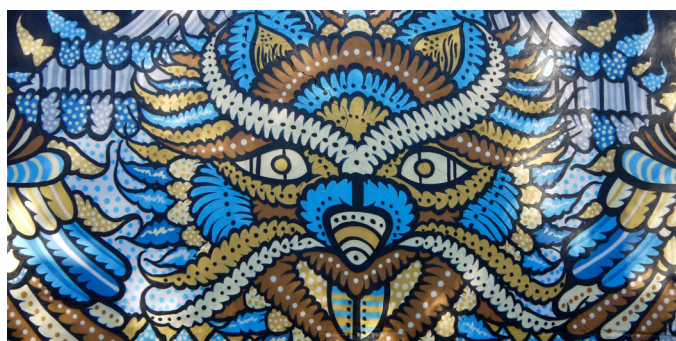
"Education about self-care is essential, not just for patients but also for carers and families. Helping people feel less alone in their journey is vital, too."

Dragon Claw is specifically for people with rheumatoid arthritis, juvenile idiopathic arthritis and lupus, as well as their carers and loved ones.

Members are invited to join from anywhere in the world, to learn about pain and pain management, and to get involved in the Dragon Claw community through forums and social connections.

Dragon Claw does not provide clinical advice however there are future plans to match patients with clinicians.

For more information visit www.dragon-claw.org



Courtesy NicoArt

Community Engagement Wins Pharmacy of the Year

Lucy Walker Chemmart in the town of Goondiwindi in Queensland has been named Pharmacy of the Year 2017 for its superior community engagement.

In a small town like Goondiwindi, with a population of less than 6,000, the community pharmacy becomes an important hub for health promotion and education as well as social connectedness.

With rural areas experiencing chronic pain at a higher rate than urban centres, community pharmacies can play a valuable role in supporting prevention and effective self-management of pain.

"Our community values advice and care when it comes to chronic pain relief," said Pharmacist Lucy Walker.

"We conduct Home Medicines Reviews, Medschecks, MedsASSIST checks, Pain Checks and we spend time with our patients and their careers discussing pain management.

"We also liaise with local allied health professionals to ensure our patients get the best advice for a holistic approach to their care."

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia announced its Pharmacy of the Year 2017 at the APP2017 conference, where new Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt offered support for the role community pharmacy in the wider healthcare system.

APP2017 set a record with more than 6,500 delegates attending the conference and a record 450 exhibitor stands, including a PainAustralia stand, in the trade exhibition.



Lucy Walker Chemmart team

Grant Opportunity

The AMP Foundation is once again offering \$1 million in AMP Tomorrow Fund grants to amazing Australians doing great things.

In 2016, they awarded grants to 53 AMP Tomorrow Makers, including artists, athletes, social innovators, scientists, educators and disability advocates. What they have in common is a determination to contribute to the community – either by creating something special or inspiring others.

The AMP Foundation is now looking for more talented Australians who are working hard to reach a goal but just need a financial boost to take it to the next level. Funding can cover a range of activities, including training, travel costs, living expenses, rent and research.

Please help the AMP Foundation to support talented and innovative individuals of all ages, interests and abilities by sharing the notice below with your colleagues, clients and community contacts. Please note, grants are for individuals only, so organisations cannot apply.

To apply or learn more, visit ampstomorrowfund.com.au. The site's 'Tips & tools' section contains a downloadable poster, fact sheet and sample application, as well as FAQs.

Consumers Invited to Medicinal Cannabis Forum

The Consumers Health Forum (CHF) is seeking expressions of interest from consumers to attend the forum on the Medicinal Use of Cannabis in Melbourne on 18 May 2017.

The forum will give general information about medicinal cannabis, evidence around its use and the access pathways including clarification of who is eligible to use it and the process for doing so.

For more information [click here](#)

Interstate travel costs will be met and reasonable travel costs within Melbourne and regional Victoria will be reimbursed.

If you would like to be considered as a CHF forum participant complete the EOI form [here](#) and submit it by COB Friday 21 April.

EVENTS



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

[PMRI Visiting Scholars Program \(Sydney\)](#)

The PMRI Visiting Scholars Program is a free monthly event providing an opportunity to hear from national and international experts in the field of pain. For details about the next seminar, visit the [PMRI website](#).

Where: Auditorium, Level 5, Kolling Building, Royal North Shore Hospital, Sydney



WHRIA
Women's Health & Research
INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA

[Pelvic Health & Education Evenings \(Sydney\)](#)

The Women's Health & Research Institute of Australia invites women with chronic pain to attend their monthly meetings, to promote health and wellbeing, and try strategies such as yoga and mindfulness. Each evening has a different theme. For details about the next meeting and to book email: support@whria.com.au

Where: WHRIA L12/97-99 Bathurst Street Sydney, 6.30-8.30pm



[14th National Rural Health Alliance Conference](#)

Hear about the latest in rural and remote health at this biennial conference. Preconference workshop on multidisciplinary pain management.

When: 26-29 April 2017

Where: Cairns Convention Centre, Cairns

[Register online](#)



[IPMRI Webinar Skills Training in Pain Management: Series 3](#)

If you are a health professional who would like to improve or update your skills in putting cognitive behavioural therapy skills into practice, sign up to this webinar run by the Pain Management Research Institute. Online and practical work required.

When: Tuesdays 6.00-7.30pm AEST (Seven sessions between 9 May and 11 July)



[Free Pain Management Program in Cantonese \(Sydney\)](#)

Free pain management program conducted in Cantonese for people aged 18 and over. Participants will need to complete a questionnaire prior to the course. A copy of the questionnaire can be obtained by calling Theresa Chow on 02 8759 4120 (Monday, Thursday, Friday).



**Choosing Wisely
Australia**

An initiative of NPS MedicineWise

[Choosing Wisely Australia National Meeting 2017](#)

NPS MedicineWise will be holding an inaugural Choosing Wisely Australia National Meeting to showcase the progress since it launched two years ago, and to highlight innovations and opportunities that support a culture shift. Free event. Registrations close 21 April.

When: Thursday 4 May 2017, 8.30am-5pm



[Australian Medicinal Cannabis Symposium \(Melbourne\)](#)

[United in Compassion](#) is hosting a symposium with international and Australian experts with a focus on education of medical professionals and engagement of the health sector. The program will also be of interest to consumer groups.

When: 23-25 June 2017

Where: Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre



LIVE



WORK



PLAY

NSW: THE STATE OF INCLUSION

[Live Work and Play: NSW the State of Inclusion](#)

NSW Family & Community Services is holding a conference on inclusion, including assistive technology, inclusive tourism, disability employment and liveable communities.

When: 17 and 18 May 2017

Where: ICC Sydney (Darling Harbour, Cockle Bay)

For more events please see our website www.painaustralia.org.au