

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 10 August 2023

AMA welcomes successful 60-day dispensing vote

In just a matter of weeks, millions of Australian patients will be able to access half-price medicines after the Senate passed the federal government's 60-day dispensing policy today.

The AMA thoroughly welcomes this outcome, ending the years-long wait for this policy to become a reality.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson thanked the Senate for ensuring that patients, from 1 September, can access cheaper medicines while making fewer trips to the pharmacy to refill scripts.

"We thank not only the government, but all the senators who stared down the negative scare campaign against this policy," Professor Robson said.

"This is an important day for Australian patients, who have been desperately waiting for much-needed financial relief amid this cost-of-living crisis.

"The carrot had been dangled in front of patients for far too long. The former Coalition government decided not to implement this measure in 2019, disregarding the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee recommendations in 2018."

Professor Robson said the final Senate vote followed years of advocacy by the AMA and other health and consumer groups.

"The AMA this morning stood on the top floor of Parliament House and called for Australia's Senate to prioritise health policy that puts patients first, allowing them to access half-price medicines under the 60-day dispensing policy.

I have been in the parliament today, where I was able to watch the vote that was finally successful in ensuring that this important change will now take effect.

"The AMA reignited the call for this policy in February this year and we have advocated for it every day since.

"Today, as it came down to the wire in the Senate, we were there to help ensure that it was successful."

Professor Robson thanked the many doctor, health and consumer groups that helped get 60-day dispensing over the line — including the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Consumers Health Forum, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Asthma Australia, Breast Cancer Network Australia and many more.

"In just a matter of weeks, affordable medication will be available to every single Australia, and I am so pleased that the Parliament did not miss this crucial opportunity to help patients keep well," Professor Robson said.

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