**Friday, 1 September 2023**

# 60-day dispensing begins, benefiting patients and the health sector

The Australian Medical Association has welcomed the start of 60-day dispensing, which is a big win for consumers, and warned any attempt to reverse the initiative will cause chaos and confusion.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson said patients will be able to access cheaper medicines from today and will save money with fewer trips to the pharmacy.

“This initiative, which we have supported since it was first recommended by the independent expert Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee five years ago, will provide much-needed financial relief amid a cost-of-living crisis,” Professor Robson said.

Professor Robson said while there had been a concerted scare campaign against the change, common sense had prevailed, and patients would benefit from the decision by most Senators to support it.

“This policy is supported by many doctor, health and consumer groups, including the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Consumers Health Forum, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, Asthma Australia and Breast Cancer Australia.

“That’s because it makes sense to make these medications more affordable for the many thousands of Australians who take them while also easing pressure on the health system.

“By making medications more affordable, patients will be more likely to get their prescriptions filled and take these medications as required. Better medication compliance keeps people well and lightens the load on our health system, particularly our hospitals.

“From a workforce perspective, the policy means fewer visits to a GP, freeing up appointments for other patients and supporting GPs to spend more time with patients who have more complex health care needs.”

Professor Robson said a disallowance motion to reverse the policy — expected from the Coalition next week — was madness, as it would be forcing patients to absorb unnecessary costs. It would also create chaos and confusion for health providers with implementation of the policy already underway.

“Patients have waited for five years to get the hip pocket savings this policy delivers due to hardline opposition from pharmacy owners. It’s time for patients to get a fair go and for the Coalition to get out of the way of this long overdue health reform and to stop defending pharmacy owner profits.”

Read more about 60-day dispensing of PBS medicines on the [Department of Health and Aged Care website](https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/60-day-prescriptions)