



Minister for Health and Aged Care
Minister for Sport
THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP

MEDIA RELEASE

13 November 2016

Community Pharmacies to Help Detect Diabetes

Community pharmacies will play a larger role in the early detection of type 2 diabetes.

Minister for Health and Aged Care Sussan Ley today announced details of the *Pharmacy Diabetes Screening Trial* under the Australian Government's \$50 million Pharmacy Trial Program.

"Extending the role of community pharmacists in primary health care will help more Australians to be tested for type 2 diabetes," Minister Ley said.

"We see pharmacists playing a critical role with one in two Australians having a chronic health condition and one in five managing two or more.

"GPs and pharmacists are two key pillars of our primary health care system and a teams-based approach promoting co-ordination among health care professionals will better meet patients' needs.

"This model keeps GPs at the centre of patient care but allows pharmacists, who have high levels of contact with the community, to identify and refer patients to a GP."

Ms Ley said the trial, which will be managed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, would involve more than 350 participating pharmacies across the country working directly with their customers to test the effectiveness of different approaches in diabetes detection.

"Early detection will include a risk assessment questionnaire to determine if someone could develop diabetes within the next five years, and may also include screening a drop of the person's blood for diabetes-related health indicators through a simple finger prick test," she said.

"Based on the outcome of these simple checks, the customer will then be referred to their doctor for follow-up."

Minister Ley said that better screening and early detection of type 2 diabetes is a focus of World Diabetes Day tomorrow.

"This year's theme is 'Eyes on Diabetes' which promotes the importance of screening and the early diagnosis and treatment of type 2 diabetes to reduce the risk of serious complications," she said.

“Type 2 diabetes usually develops in adults over the age of 45 years, but it is becoming increasingly common in younger age groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and those with a family history of diabetes.”

This new trial complements other Australian Government initiatives, such as the Australian National Diabetes Strategy and the National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions.

As one of our most prominent chronic diseases, type 2 diabetes affects an estimated 1 million Australians and places a significant cost on the nation’s health and finances at nearly \$1 billion per year.

This announcement complements recent new listings on the PBS, including:

- Exenatide (Bydureon®) – listed from 1 September 2016 – a new diabetes treatment which allows patients to inject themselves only once a week, rather than twice a day, meaning they will avoid up to 13 injections per week. This listing will save patients over \$1600 per year.
- Dexamethasone (Ozurdex®) – listed from 1 November 2016 – a new treatment for diabetic macular odema. People with type 1 and type 2 diabetes are at risk of diabetic macular oedema. Dexamethasone treatment requires one injection every six months, compared to monthly injections required for other diabetic macular oedema treatments. This listing will save patients up to \$3,600 per year.

Media contact: Senior Media Adviser, Randal Markey, 0417 318 620