

Codeine rescheduling changes

North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network and North West Melbourne Pharmacotherapy Network are here to support GPs, pharmacists and other health professionals to prepare for the transition to Prescription Only codeine.

What is changing?

All codeine-containing products will require a prescription from **1 February 2018**.

How to prepare for codeine rescheduling?

Conversations with clients around codeine and other opioid use can be **challenging**.

Your client may not view their opioid use as **problematic** nor be aware of some of the associated **risks with opioid use**.

Start having the conversations with clients **now**.

We also recommend the following:

- Access various **training and resources** before 1 February 2018
- Hand out **consumer resources** as often as possible.
- Familiarise yourself with **local treatment services**
- **Encourage clients** to discuss options with their **GP**

Pharmacotherapy for Opioid Dependence

- With upcoming changes to codeine scheduling, as well as Real-Time Prescription Monitoring/SafeScript, it is anticipated that more individuals will be identified with opioid dependence and, as a result, will require treatment with **pharmacotherapy**.

- **Pharmacotherapy**, also known as Opioid Replacement Therapy, is a key component of the **Medication Assisted Treatment for Opioid Dependence** approach in Victoria. It is an effective evidence-based treatment for opioid dependence – whether dependence on over-the-counter codeine, prescription opioids or illicit opioids.
- The North West Melbourne Pharmacotherapy Network is available to provide support to GPs, pharmacists and other professionals across North Western Melbourne. Look out for upcoming Communities of Practice and other supports.

Potential impacts

- It is likely **demand for GP services will increase** in the initial rescheduling period, particularly if people remain unaware of the changes.
- If people are not prepared for the change, they may become **agitated by their inability to access medications**.
- People who are dependent on opioids including over the counter options, may experience **withdrawal symptoms**.
- We know people will present to services with **varied and complex needs**, including significant mental health issues and other AOD use. Some may be **well engaged with the service system**, while others may be **unaware of treatment options**.

See overleaf for a full list of training and resources ahead of February 2018

Education, Training and Resources

Victorian PHN Alliance and Pharmacotherapy Networks http://vphna.org.au/codeine-changes/	The Victorian PHNs and Pharmacotherapy networks have combined to curate the most relevant information for health professionals regarding Codeine rescheduling.
TGA Codeine Hub www.tga.gov.au/codeine-info-hub	The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) codeine website containing comprehensive information and fact sheets for consumers, as well as guidance for health professionals. Literature on harm from codeine is also available here.
National Prescribing Service (NPS) www.nps.org.au/medical-info/clinical-topics/over-the-counter-codeine-changes-to-supply	Dedicated NPS codeine page containing articles, resources and links to assist health professionals to prepare for codeine rescheduling.
Pain Australia www.painaustralia.org.au	Education and resources about acute, chronic and cancer pain management.
Clinical Advice	
Drug and Alcohol Clinical Advisory Service (DACAS) 1800 812 804 www.dacas.org.au	A free 24 hour, 7 day specialist telephone consultancy service providing clinical advice to health professionals managing patients with drug and alcohol issues, including dependence on pharmaceutical opioids.
Local and Statewide treatment and referral services	
DirectLine 1800 888 236 www.directline.org.au	State-wide confidential Alcohol and Other Drug counselling and referral support.
PAMS (Pharmacotherapy, Advocacy, Mediation and Support) 1800 443 844 www.hrvic.org.au	Provide information, support, advocacy, referral and mediation for pharmacotherapy consumers and their direct service providers
North and West Metro AOD Service 1800 700 514 http://www.regen.org.au/treatment-support/north-and-west-metro-aod-service	Intake and Assessment services across Melbourne's North and West Metro regions.
Australian Community Support Organisation 1300 022 760 <i>*If in Shire of Macedon Ranges</i>	Intake and Referral Service across regional Victoria to assist people experiencing mental health, alcohol and drugs issues
Information and support about pharmacotherapy	
North West Melbourne Pharmacotherapy Network (03) 9448 5511 pharmacotherapy@cohealth.org.au	Supports pharmacists and GPs to provide pharmacotherapy services and best practice opioid management.

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