



Tuesday, 11 April 2023

## **Go-it-alone pharmacists' prescribing not the answer to GP shortages**

The AMA today launched its [You deserve more](#) campaign, highlighting the flaws in go-it-alone pharmacy prescribing models and outlining solutions to access and affordability issues that will make a real difference to Australians, without putting their health and safety at risk.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson said patients deserve more than trials that threaten safety, fragment care, and undermine Australia's world-class health system.

"Governments should be investing in evidence-based solutions to improve access to general practice and affordability of medicines," Professor Robson said.

"Patients deserve access to the full range of treatments and holistic doctor-led care, rather than being treated as customer at a counter. They deserve the care of someone who has the qualifications to properly diagnose them, who can take the time to ensure they get the best health outcomes."

Professor Robson said international evidence does not support autonomous pharmacy prescribing, which is being rolled out in several states and territories, often with no appropriate trial or governance.

"We've looked at comparable countries and Australia is an outlier in progressing with autonomous pharmacy prescribing. At a time when governments should be developing policies that strengthen general practice and embrace team-based care, they have chosen to short-change the community and resorted to experimenting with models like this.

"Allowing pharmacists to unilaterally prescribe medicines has the real potential to harm patients and turns on its head the time-honoured principles of separating prescribing and dispensing to prevent conflicts of interest."

Professor Robson said the approach in some jurisdictions undermines years of development, consultation and agreement on national tried and tested governance frameworks overseen by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and the Pharmacy Board of Australia.

"The move by states and territories to allow autonomous pharmacy prescribing sidesteps independent and expert advice intended to protect patients, including clinical guidelines. Patients deserve more. We should be looking at what's effective, including funding to improve access to care including after-hours; supporting GPs to deliver care in aged care facilities, and supporting them to spend longer with patients.

"There are also immediate solutions to improve access to and affordability of medicines, including implementing the recommendations of the independent Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee on two-month dispensing and 12-month prescribing, as well encouraging competition by changing pharmacy ownership and location rules and allowing pharmacies to discount the co-payment by more than \$1.

"We want governments to look at the evidence and work with doctors to design safe and robust models that are backed by evidence and won't further fragment care. Our *You deserve more* campaign clearly explains why these go-it-alone models aren't in patients' best interest and, more importantly, outlines the solutions governments are looking for."

[Visit the \*You deserve more\* campaign website](#)

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