



Dear Pharmacist,

We are undertaking a project in conjunction with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia concerning opioid management in the pharmacy with regard to both prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) opioids. The aim of the project is to improve health outcomes for people with problematic use of opioids.

Despite the recent announcement of the upscheduling of OTC codeine, the problematic use of opioids will remain a public health challenge. Furthermore, it is likely that community pharmacies will be under enormous pressure with people seeking to stockpile OTC codeine prior to the implementation of this change.

MedsAssist has been shown to be an effective tool in identifying patients with problematic use of OTC codeine. The objective of this project is to develop a protocol that will improve collaboration between pharmacists and GPs by establishing referral pathways for patients with problematic use of OTC codeine and facilitate access to:

- a) **better pain management** OR
- b) **treatment for opioid dependence** if this has become an issue.

The protocol may also apply to patients with problematic use of prescribed opioids.

We are looking for up to **five** pharmacies to be involved in this project. Involvement would include development of the protocol, test its use and evaluate the process. There is funding available for the project based on patient recruitment and pharmacists will also be paid for their time to attend meetings etc. One of the requirements of participating in this project will be if a patient is assessed by the treating GP as requiring treatment with Opioid Replacement Therapy, that their regular referring pharmacy would facilitate access to this treatment.

There will be a meeting held in early February to discuss the project further and start the development of a protocol. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about this project.

Please register your interest by contacting:

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