



THE  
AUSTRALIAN  
PAIN SOCIETY

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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# AUSTRALIAN PAIN SOCIETY SEES BETTER PAIN MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITH REAL-TIME PRESCRIPTION MONITORING

The Victorian Health Minister Jill Hennessy has announced a plan to have in place real-time prescription monitoring by 2018.

President of the Australian Pain Society (APS), Dr Geoffrey Speldewinde, is strongly supportive of the bold initiative of the Victorian Government in acknowledging the difficulties created for the people of Victoria and their health care professionals by the difficulty in keeping track of medication prescriptions. This is no better exemplified than in the current huge numbers of Victorians dying every year through overdoses of prescribed opiates.

“Currently deaths due to opioid overdose exceed those from the road toll. Real-time prescription monitoring will definitely lead to fewer Australians with opiate dependency, fewer overdoses of prescribed medications, AND with less long-term costs to affected individuals and to Australian society as a whole” Dr Speldewinde went on to say.

20% of Australians have chronic pain so there are more than 5 million Australians living daily with chronic pain, suffering varying degrees of disability. However, for many people not only in Victoria but around Australia, and their doctors and pharmacists, it is far too easy to resort to prescribed and over-the-counter medications as often their only ‘coping mechanism’. The physical and psychological impacts that can arise from living with chronic pain result all too easily in dependency on just using medications as the main coping strategy.

However the better option to secure a better and more productive quality of life is through combined and coordinated multidisciplinary health care. The Australian Pain Society considers that there is overwhelming evidence that chronic pain has better results for patients when it is managed by non-pharmacologic methods rather than by opioids.

Dr Speldewinde went on to say "real-time prescription monitoring, following on from its successful use in Tasmania, implicitly recognises that there is an increasing need for people with a wide range of difficult pain conditions, across all age groups, and living with a range of disabilities, to be able to access affordable and coordinated multidisciplinary services."

The Australian Pain Society (APS) is Australia's leading national forum of a wide range of university-trained health professionals (including doctors, nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, psychologists and researchers) trained in the recognition, research, management and advocacy around all aspects of pain in Australia. The Australian Pain Society is well positioned and well-resourced to provide support, education, and advocacy for patients and clinicians.

For more detailed information please refer to our webpage: <https://www.apsoc.org.au>

For further comment, information or photos, please ring:

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