

Media Release

The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples
Acting Minister for Health
Acting Minister for Health Infrastructure
Acting Minister for Medical Research



Monday, 18 September 2023

COMMUNITY PHARMACIST PILOT ONE STEP CLOSER

The Andrews Labor Government is calling for community pharmacists to participate in a statewide pilot that will allow Victorians to get treatment and advice for common conditions and basic health care needs from their local pharmacist.

Acting Minister for Health Gabrielle Williams today announced the EOI process is open for the pilot, which will provide an alternative to booking appointments with busy GPs when Victorians are sick, need a quick vaccine, or are renewing a script for something like the pill.

We know it's never been harder to see a GP – let alone one that bulk bills – and the *Victorian Budget 2023/24* invested \$20 million to establish the 12-month pilot, which will free up GPs to provide care to patients with more complex needs and reduce non-urgent presentations to our emergency departments.

To be part of the pilot, community pharmacists will be required to meet certain criteria, including having a consulting room at the pharmacy – and they must complete mandatory training for each of the piloted services they will be providing.

Soon people will be able to access expanded vaccination services, get a resupply of the pill or receive treatment for uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTIs). The pilot will later expand to allow treatment for select mild skin conditions.

The design and implementation of the pilot will be guided by expert advisory and clinical groups representing consumers, pharmacists and doctors.

The pilot will be evaluated, and any recommendations will help inform longer-term decision making around the role of community pharmacists.

This is just one of the many initiatives we're delivering to improve access to care and provide an alternative to busy hospitals, including the 27 Priority Primary Care Centres across the state and the Victorian Virtual ED which have managed around 300,000 presentations combined to date.

Pharmacists can complete an online EOI at health.vic.gov.au/primary-care/victorian-community-pharmacist-statewide-pilot.

Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Health Gabrielle Williams

"Timely and trustworthy care is so important, and this pilot will trial an expanded role for community pharmacists to see how we can provide Victorians with more options to get care when and where they need it."

"Pharmacist prescribing is already common place in many countries and can be both a safe and effective healthcare alternative when people are struggling to get in with a GP."

"Our community pharmacists have a wealth of experience and knowledge and are a trusted source for many Victorians – they know when there's a simple solution and when things are more complex and need to be referred to a doctor."

Media contact: Liam Webster-Mcallister 0488 771 334 | liam.mcallister@minstaff.vic.gov.au