

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Tuesday, 20 February 2024

THOUSANDS GETTING TREATMENT AS PHARMACY PILOT EXPANDS

Victorians seeking treatment for mild and common skin conditions will soon be able to access the care they need at a community pharmacy, at no cost.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today announced that 729 pharmacies can treat Victorians with mild psoriasis or shingles from early March, as part of the next phase in the Allan Labor Government's Community Pharmacy Pilot.

New data reveals more than 3,700 Victorians – overwhelmingly women – have already accessed care at a pharmacy since the start of the pilot. 27 per cent of the participating pharmacies are in regional Victoria.

Victorian women are reaping the benefits of the pilot, with around 2,000 women seeking care and antibiotics to treat uncomplicated urinary tract infections.

The pilot is also making it easier for women to get a resupply of the oral contraceptive pill, with around 1,300 women avoiding trips to their GP for a simple script refill.

Thanks to the pilot, preparing for an overseas trip is less stressful with 400 Victorians accessing the in-pharmacy travel health and vaccination consultations.

Feedback from the pilot has been overwhelmingly positive, with patients reporting they are very satisfied with the service they received, and most did not need to seek further healthcare.

To participate, all pharmacists must complete mandatory training and demonstrate they know when someone should be referred to a GP or hospital. They must also have appropriate consulting facilities within the pharmacy.

The pilot is guided by experts and clinical groups representing the pharmacy and medical professions. At its conclusion, the pilot will be evaluated, and any recommendations will inform longer-term decision making.

There is no charge for patients to see a participating pharmacist to receive care under the pilot. If medications are required, the cost to the patient would be no more than if they had received prescription from a GP.

This \$20 million investment is increasing the number of primary care options for Victorians, freeing up GPs for people with more complex conditions and reducing non-urgent emergency department presentations.

It adds to other Labor Government initiatives including the 29 Priority Primary Care Centres and the Victorian Virtual Emergency Department, which have managed more than 540,000 presentations combined to date.

Quote attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

"It just makes sense to be able to pop down to your local pharmacy to get treatment for everyday conditions and basic health care needs, and our pilot program is helping thousands of women do just that."

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"Running out of a pill prescription or needing to get treatment quickly for a UTI can be inconvenient and expensive – that's why we're making it cheaper and easier for Victorian women to get the care they need."

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