The Hon Jill Hennessy MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services

Thursday, 19 October, 2017

LIFE-SAVING REAL-TIME PRESCRIPTION MONITORING LAWS PASS PARLIAMENT


The Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Real-time Prescription Monitoring) Bill 2017 establishes the real-time prescription monitoring system, to be known as SafeScript.

In a historic milestone, the new legislation will see Victoria become the first state in Australia to roll out a mandatory prescription monitoring system on this scale.

Last year, 372 Victorians died from an overdose of prescription medicines. More people in Victoria have lost their lives from the misuse of prescription medicines than the road toll for five years in a row.

SafeScript will provide doctors, nurse practitioners and pharmacists access to an up-to-the-minute database to review prescription histories of patients in their care and enable safer clinical decisions.

It will monitor all Schedule 8 medicines such as morphine and oxycodone – which carry the highest risk of misuse – and other high-risk medicines, including all benzodiazepines such as diazepam.

Once fully implemented, it will be mandatory for prescribers and pharmacists to check the system before writing or dispensing a prescription for a high risk medicine, with some exceptions in certain circumstances.

The legislation also streamlines the existing Schedule 8 permit requirements to reduce duplication and regulatory burden for clinicians.

More support will also be offered to minimise any additional impact the system may have on clinicians and to ensure that SafeScript is embedded in existing clinical work.

The Andrews Labor Government invested $29.5 million to implement real-time prescription monitoring in Victoria.

Over the next year, we will build software for the SafeScript system, undertake further public consultation and deliver training for health professionals. The system is expected to start rolling out from late 2018 in a phased approach across Victoria.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jill Hennessy

“It is a tragedy that so many lives are lost to prescription medicine misuse. SafeScript will save lives, by helping to stop prescription shopping from next year.”

“SafeScript will be the most comprehensive real-time prescription monitoring system in Australia. It will be effective and user-friendly for health professionals, while protecting the public from avoidable harm.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Mental Health Martin Foley

“Too many Victorians are being harmed from prescription medicines. We are taking action to ensure people who may be misusing prescription medicines can get the support and treatment they need to beat their addiction.”

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