

25th July 2023

Dear Aged Care Partner,

Recently the Australian Government announced a new measure to save money on supply of medicines – known as the 60-day dispensing measure.

This measure will come into place in three tranches commencing in September 2023, and it will allow consumers to receive 60 days' supply of medication at each dispensing where currently they received 30 days. This effectively facilitates 12 months' worth of medicines from a single script instead of the current 6 months.

The dispensing of 60-days' supply is equivalent to providing two prescriptions for the price of one, which **effectively halves the dispensing income for community pharmacy.**

In aged care settings, pharmacy services such as repackaging of medicines into weekly Dose Administration Aids (DAAs, such as sachets or Webster Packs), daily deliveries of medicines, 24-hour access for afterhours medicines, prescription management and account management are provided free to residents and facilities, without any government funding or subsidy. **These services are funded through dispensing income at no cost to residents, facilities, or government – which the government has not taken into consideration.**

A significant cut in pharmacy income such as this makes these services unviable.

Since the 60-day dispensing announcement, pharmacists in the Healthy Collective have been consulting with industry, governmental and political groups to increase awareness of the impact of this measure and looking into the foreseeable impact on pharmacy operations and sustainability. For all pharmacies, this measure has prompted consideration of opening hours, service fees, accessibility, staffing hours and continuation of home delivery arrangements.

For aged care residents and facilities, cuts to pharmacy services due to reduced funding will have a major impact on the safe, timely and accurate supply of medicine.

Pharmacies may be forced to introduce additional fees for services or look at efficiency changes to service levels. This impact is being debated heavily at government levels, including in Senate Estimate hearings.

During this debate it has been suggested by Department of Health at Senate Estimates (2/6/23) that aged care facilities could consider substituting the Dose Administration Aid (sachet or Webster-pack) with a nurse assisting residents to take their medication from original containers – which is clearly an impractical and unsafe approach for aged care facilities that does not reflect best practice principles!

However, with your support this can all be managed.



It's good to
be healthy.

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The reality is that most aged care consumers will not benefit from 60-day dispensing.

After taking a detailed look into our records to understand the consumer level impact, over 85% of residents will not benefit financially from the introduction of this measure – nor will they be disadvantaged.

Data published by Choice Aged Care, an independent clinical pharmacist aged care services provider, suggests this could be as high as 92% of residents!

Once a resident reaches their annual PBS Safety Net (which over 85% will) they receive free PBS medicines for the remainder of the year. In fact, they will get to this point quicker with 30-day supply, not 60-day supply!

Furthermore, where aged care National Residential Medication Charts (NRMC) are in place, the doctor is required to review the chart at least every 4 months – so a 12-month prescription is unnecessary!

How can aged care help?

We are asking for your support and endorsement of messages to residents, families and doctors that it is in their best interest to maintain the current arrangement of 30-days of medicine supply – basically no change to what they are doing currently, and that they will not be disadvantaged in doing so.

In the coming weeks we will provide consumer directed communication explaining this, as well as letters to GPs so they are also informed.

If you would like further information, we have published a brief Frequently Asked Questions document, and you can also access a further explanation on the 60-day dispensing measure and how it pertains to pharmacy service funding for aged care on our website: [here](#)

Kind regards,

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