

## WSPHN INVOLVEMENT IN THE AUSTRALIAN MINOR AILMENTS SCHEME REPORT

**11 February 2020 – For immediate distribution**

WentWest, as the Western Sydney Primary Health Network, strongly supports the incorporation of non-dispensing pharmacists into general practices to improve medication management, educate patients and support GP prescribing: a model that would improve patient care and deliver significant savings to the Australian health system. This position is strongly supported by the Australian Medical Association (AMA).

Over several years WentWest has invested in trialling this model and to further develop and expand the use of General Practice Pharmacists (GPP). These projects involved the integration of pharmacists into Western Sydney general practices to work collaboratively as part of the patient care team. During the most recent trial there were 493 consultations with 984 recommendations made, with over 70% of these recommendations accepted.

WentWest continues to support the role of the GPP across the region, most recently in collaboration with the education and research team from the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) Graduate School of Health (Discipline of Pharmacy), to develop a comprehensive graduate certificate program for pharmacists integrated into the Australian general practice (primary care) environment. This innovative program launched this month and is now taking applications.

In parallel, WentWest has had a minor involvement in a UTS trial intended to improve the quality of advice provided by pharmacists, their communication with GPs, and referral processes. WentWest's involvement was limited to inviting practices to participate in the study and contributing to the development of a Health Pathway for pharmacists. Participation in this study provided GPs with unique information about the management of their patients in community pharmacy - information not normally accessible to GPs. WentWest did not provide any funding for this study.

The aim of the UTS Australian Minor Ailments Scheme (AMAS) study was to evaluate enhanced management of minor ailments in community pharmacy with direct communication to GPs. The research objectives explored co-design, a pilot study to assess the feasibility of AMAS and an impact study to evaluate the impact of AMAS compared to usual pharmacy care. The final objective of this research was to support integration, appropriate use of over-the-counter medicines and appropriate referral to GPs for patients presenting with minor ailments in Australia.



WentWest would like to acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Nation Peoples and the Traditional Custodians of this land. We value their culture, identity, and continuing connection to country, waters, kin and community. We would like to acknowledge and give our respect to Elders past, present and future. We are committed to making a valued contribution to the wellbeing of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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# MEDIA RELEASE

The core finding of the AMAS Study Report was that pharmacist education relating to the management or triaging of a small number of solidly evidence-based presentations resulted in improved treatment recommendations and increased referrals to GPs. 52% of patients who were referred by their pharmacist in AMAS followed through with the referral, compared to just 16% of patients receiving usual care.

Wentwest is awaiting the release of the Commonwealth's Primary Health Care 10-Year Plan with the hope that – among many advances, the role of non-dispensing pharmacists in general practice will be strengthened, expanded and funded. Our position continues to be aligned with that of the AMA.



#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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