



The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

We are writing in relation to the impending change to the scheduling of codeine products due to come into effect early next year.

All jurisdictions are committed to reducing the impact of inappropriate medication use, addiction, and overdoses of all kinds, and are taking a range of actions in support of this policy goal.

However, some stakeholders have raised a number of concerns about the unintended consequences of the change in scheduling of codeine products.

In particular, given codeine products are widely used across the community by people to manage a range of health issues, including pain, stakeholders are concerned about the impact a large increase in the number of people requiring access to General Practitioners (GPs) for prescriptions will mean for the primary care system.

There is concern that this will be felt particularly acutely in rural and regional areas where access to GPs is already low, and that some people managing chronic conditions with codeine medications will deteriorate as they abandon medication due to the out-of-pocket costs associated with accessing GPs for their prescription.

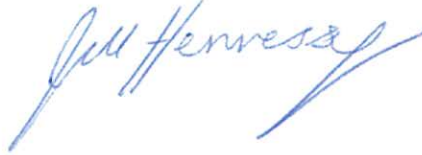
We would welcome the Commonwealth working with stakeholders to address these issues, ahead of the rapidly approaching implementation of the proposed change in scheduling. In this regard, we respectfully put that any action occur at the Commonwealth level to prevent variation in prescribing and dispensing practices.

Could you please advise what opportunities may exist for these stakeholders to discuss their concerns further with you.

Yours sincerely



Hon Brad Hazzard MP
Minister for Health
New South Wales



Hon Jill Hennessy MP
Minister for Health
Victoria



Hon Cameron Dick MP
Minister for Health
Queensland



Hon Roger Cook MP
Minister for Health
Western Australia



Hon Michael Ferguson MP
Minister for Health
Tasmania



Hon Meegan Fitzharris MP
Minister for Health and
Wellbeing
Australian Capital Territory



Hon Natasha Fyles MLA
Minister for Health
Northern Territory

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