



...good health and wellbeing in rural and remote Australia

MEDIA RELEASE

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Paving the way for codeine change in rural and remote Australia

From 1 February 2018 medicines containing codeine will no longer be available without a prescription. To prepare for the change, the National Rural Health Alliance – Australia’s peak non-government organisation for rural and remote health – is developing specialised information for people living in rural and remote areas to ensure that they are aware of the change and how it may affect them.

Mark Diamond, CEO of the Alliance, explains that people in rural and remote areas are more vulnerable to the potential negative impact of such changes, due to different levels of service access:

“Long distances, financial factors and lack of available services make it much more difficult for people living in rural and remote areas to access GPs, allied health professionals and specialists. For this reason, we are developing resources to ensure that the seven million people living in rural and remote areas know in advance about the changes and where to go for assistance if they feel they need it.”

The move to restrict the availability of medications containing codeine was unanimously agreed to by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and is in line with changes introduced in many other parts of the world to reduce rates of opiate addiction and overdose.

Individuals and organisations in rural and remote Australia wishing to receive more information about the planned changes can visit www.ruralhealth.org.au/codeine to have their details added to the mailing list.

Alliance Member Bodies, including the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), CRANaplus and the Rural Doctors' Association of Australia (RDAA), will be working to ensure that healthcare and allied health professionals in rural and remote areas are prepared for the change. Funding for this initiative is provided by the Australian Government.

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The National Rural Health Alliance is Australia’s peak non-government organisation for rural and remote health. Its vision is good health and wellbeing in rural and remote Australia.