

1 July 2010

New brand and Medicines Line number for NPS

From 1 July the National Prescribing Service will be known as ***NPS – better choices, better health***. The new brand, which was unveiled at the National Medicines Symposium in May, marks a new chapter in NPS's history as it strives to become a household name and for all Australians to be medicinewise.

“The National Prescribing Service is no longer a broad enough descriptor for what we do. Our work goes beyond prescription medicines and we now address all medicines and quality use of medical tests,” acting NPS CEO, Karen Kaye said.

“We also want to become a household name by 2018 and for quality use of medicines to be widely understood and implemented. This fresh new look, and consistent branding across all our products and services will help us get there.”

Given the value we have built in our existing brand over 12 years, we have sought *evolution* rather than *revolution*. Our research also showed that while consumers aren't very familiar with us, health professionals are and many already refer to us as NPS. It was important to retain the equity in our name with existing audiences while being clear and understandable to new audiences we are trying to reach.

The new financial year also sees a new era for NPS's phone services. Medicines Line, the consumer information service, is now being delivered in collaboration with the National Healthcare Call Centre Network service, *healthdirect Australia*.

We were not able to retain the current phone number for Medicines Line, and this has changed as of 1 July to **1300 MEDICINE** (1300 633 424). In many ways this will be easier for consumers to remember.

Healthdirect Australia is staffed by registered nurses, and Medicines Line will operate Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm AEST. Under the new model:

- Medicines related calls are answered by a *healthdirect Australia* nurse in the first instance and triaged on the basis of clear protocols as required
- Complex calls which fall outside the scope of national nursing standards will be referred to either the caller's doctor, community pharmacist, another health professional or to NPS
- NPS will operate an in-house pharmacist service with capacity to answer up to 10,000 calls per year. Calls will be referred to NPS from *healthdirect Australia*.

“This new delivery model offers consumers greater access to information about their medicines, and by offering the NPS in-house service we will ensure consumers continue to have access to a service that can answer more complex questions,” Ms Kaye said.

“Importantly, it will also allow us to capture data about medicines issues to better inform our quality use of medicines programs.”

The Adverse Medicines Events line which NPS also funds will not be affected by these changes and its number remains the same.

Following the closure of TAIS, a guide to medicine information sources has been made available on the NPS website and includes links to evidence-based sources relevant to Australian practice. The webpage link is www.nps.org.au/health_professionals/guide_to_medicines_information_resources

ENDS

Media enquiries to Katie Butt, NPS Media Adviser, 02 8217 8667 or kbutt@nps.org.au

*Independent, evidence-based and not-for-profit,
NPS enables better decisions about medicines and medical tests.
We are funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.*