MEDIA RELEASE
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NPS budget announcement

NPS Better choices, Better health has welcomed the announcement of additional funding for a new national program to monitor the uptake and use of prescription medicines, aptly named MedicineWatch.

Announced as part of a wider post-marketing surveillance package to be coordinated by the Department of Health and Ageing, the NPS MedicineWatch program will complement existing data sources and provide better visibility and understanding of how medicines are prescribed and their positive and negative impacts on health in a representative sample of the Australian population.

“Often the long-term safety and effectiveness of medicines can only be established once a drug has entered the market and is being used by millions of people experiencing its benefits and risks. In an Australian-first, MedicineWatch will provide important data on how medicines are being used, in what conditions and with what outcomes. This information will allow policy makers and clinicians to make better-informed decisions about the registration, listing and prescribing of medicines and lead to better health outcomes for all Australians,” said NPS CEO Dr Lynn Weekes.

Data will be collected via the establishment of a network comprised of 500 general practices across Australia and is expected to include around 1.5-2.5 million de-identified patient records. Stakeholders will be consulted extensively and form part of the steering group for the program providing strategic advice and overseeing its delivery. The data generated by this project will be in the public domain and available for public health and research use.

MedicineWatch is expected to generate savings to the PBS over the long-term, via interventions and the provision of better information for evidence-based policy decisions.

Funding for the program is in excess of $16 million over four years. Further details regarding MedicineWatch will be announced over the coming months.

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NPS enables better decisions about medicines and medical tests.
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