



National Prescribing Service Limited



Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia

MEDIA RELEASE

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Generic medicines messages target Chinese and Italian communities

The third phase of the National Prescribing Service Limited's (NPS) *Generic medicines are an equal choice* campaign will begin on 1 February with targeted messages to seniors in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Community service announcements and interviews with health professionals will be broadcast in Cantonese, Mandarin and Italian on SBS and other community-language radio stations across Australia, while printed in-language resources are being developed in partnership with the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) and will be available in mid March.

"NPS and FECCA have undertaken research which highlights the need for more accessible information around generic medicines for Italian and Chinese seniors. This campaign is an important means of enhancing awareness and dispelling misconceptions about generic medicines and ensuring diverse Australians have the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about their health", FECCA Director, Peter van Vliet, said.

"Receiving accurate and reliable information about medicines is essential to achieving positive health outcomes. Yet for culturally and linguistically diverse seniors, such information may be difficult to access due to language barriers, low levels of cultural competency of health systems, or the experience of navigating unfamiliar medicines systems", Mr van Vliet said.

The key message during this phase of the campaign is that generic medicines contain the same active ingredient as the original brand medicines, although they may look different or come in different packaging. Reiterating that generic medicines meet the same Australian government standards as other medicines is also very important.

Seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are encouraged to speak to their doctor or pharmacist to discuss whether there may be a generic medicine suitable for them.

"We know that seniors from communities who speak languages other than English are particularly inclined to listen and consider medicines information from their doctors and pharmacists. The role health professionals play in explaining and reinforcing messages about understanding medicine and using medicines safely is extremely important," NPS Deputy CEO, Karen Kaye said.

Health professionals should also be aware that there may be difficulties with the direct translation of 'generic' for some languages. For example, direct Italian translation of 'generic medicine' could be understood as being any medicine that is not a 'Prescription Only' medicine.

"Language barriers should not prevent people from understanding and having access to information about medicines," Ms Kaye said.

Pharmacies needing interpreting services can call the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's free Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450.

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Media enquiries to Katie Butt, NPS Media Adviser, 0419 618 365 or email kbutt@nps.org.au; or to Peter van Vliet, FECCA Director, 0421 558 544.

The National Prescribing Service Limited (NPS) is an independent, non-profit organisation for Quality Use of Medicines funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

FECCA is the national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.