



National Prescribing Service Limited

MEDIA RELEASE

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Strong interest demonstrates value of prescribing data project

General practice networks have shown significant interest in the Prescribing Data in General Practice Demonstration pilot project, with 37 networks applying to take part.

The quality improvement project is a collaboration between the National Prescribing Service (NPS) and the Australian General Practice Network (AGPN). It aims to help general practitioners (GPs) review their prescribing practices and management of patients with chronic heart failure and hypertension, look at best practice guidelines and discuss management with their own peers.

“We were overwhelmed by the interest in this project. It indicates there’s a genuine interest in general practice in piloting new and innovative approaches to quality use of medicines in Australia,” AGPN CEO, Mr David Butt said.

The project uses a data extraction software tool so GPs can receive immediate feedback on their prescribing practices against clinical indicators. Feedback of aggregate results at general practice network and national levels can also be accessed.

“Chronic heart failure and hypertension have well-established treatment guidelines but gaps have been identified in optimal treatment,” NPS CEO, Dr Lynn Weekes said.

“Studies show only half of newly diagnosed hypertensive patients with no co-morbidities, are receiving first-line recommended therapy, while there is under-prescribing of the recommended drugs and dosage levels for some patients with chronic heart failure.”

“The consequences of these prescribing practices include increased hospitalisation, higher mortality, greater symptom severity and increased costs to the health care system, which is why this project is so important,” Dr Weekes said.

General practices participating in the project will be supported by their local division of general practice to deliver the initiative.

“The project aims to find ways to help GPs improve their quality use of medicines without having to spend hours of their own time evaluating data. This is a simple to use tool, that will have benefits for both GPs and their patients,” Mr Butt said.

The pilot project, which runs for two years, will involve 20 general practice networks and will begin in September 2009. For further information contact 02 8217 8700 or visit www.nps.org.au/health_professionals/prescribing_data_in_general_practice

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Media enquiries to:

Katie Butt, NPS Media Adviser, 02 8217 8667

Frith Rayner, AGPN Director Communications and Marketing, 02 6228 0819