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COMMUNITY DISPENSING OF HIV MEDICINES

From 01 July 2015, People Living with HIV (PLHIV) will be able to access HIV medicines from community pharmacies. This will apply to prescriptions dated 01 July 2015 onwards.

HIV medicines have historically been dispensed from hospital pharmacies. PLHIV will still be able to access their HIV medications from hospital pharmacies if they wish; however the addition of community pharmacies will now provide a choice.

Community dispensing of HIV medicines is an exciting and significant change for PLHIV and will provide greater flexibility and convenience around where and when HIV medicines can be collected.

Extended trading hours of community pharmacies, including weekend trading, will be appealing to some PLHIV, particularly for those who work or find it difficult to access a hospital pharmacy.

In a survey conducted by the National Association of People With HIV Australia (NAPWHA), 72% of PLHIV indicated that they would prefer to collect their HIV medications from a community pharmacy. The NAPWHA survey also found that 70% of PLHIV expressed some concern about their HIV status being known at a community pharmacy.

The executive officer of Queensland Positive People (QPP), Simon O'Connor, said:

'We welcome community dispensing of HIV medications. This change will provide PLHIV with a choice of where they can access their HIV medications and will improve convenience and access to treatment for many PLHIV.'

However, QPP acknowledges that not all community pharmacies will choose to dispense HIV medicines. O'Connor added:

'We encourage PLHIV to make enquiries with their local pharmacy to establish whether or not the pharmacy would be willing to dispense HIV medications. If there are any concerns about confidentiality, PLHIV can request a confidential conversation with their community pharmacist about dispensing of HIV medications.'

Queensland Positive People has developed a resource titled, '**Community Pharmacy Dispensing – HIV Medications**'. The resource, now available from QPP, provides PLHIV with information on how to access their HIV medicines from a community pharmacy.

If PLHIV require assistance or support in relation to community dispensing they can contact QPP on 1800 636 241 (Toll Free) or 3013 5555.

ENDS.

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