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The Health Professionals Prescribing Pathway – the right direction says Nurses

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) said the Health Minister's approval of The Health Professionals Prescribing Pathway (HPPP) this week is a step in the right direction to forming a nationally consistent approach to best practice prescribing models.

Health Workforce Australia has undertaken an extensive body of work to develop a nationally consistent way for health professionals to make medicines more readily available to the community and the ACN believes the Health Professionals Prescribing Pathway brings together the safest, best practice prescribing models from across the country.

Adjunct Professor Debra Thoms, ACN CEO, says the Health Professionals Prescribing Pathway upholds the National Strategy for the Quality Use of Medicines and will support more registered health professionals, including nurses, to prescribe medications within their scope of practice and within context of state and territory law.

"By approving the Health Professionals Prescribing Pathway, the Health Ministers have recognised that there is greater opportunity to use the skills of appropriately educated health professionals to deliver much needed prescribing services to promote easier and timelier access to health care.

"If Australia is to meet the growing demands for health care, new models and approaches to areas such as prescribing are needed. The time and financial cost to individuals, and the community of, always relying on medical professionals to prescribe will not be sustainable in the longer term," said Adjunct Professor Thoms.

In many countries including Ireland, the UK and Spain, nurse prescribing rights are being expanded, particularly in the primary health care setting. ACN believes the Health Professionals Prescribing Pathway is a positive step towards Australia becoming part of this trend which makes better use of scarce health resources, as well as improving medication and health care outcomes for the community.

"The Health Professionals Prescribing Pathway has enhanced access to safe and quality care and it is time that Australia recognised the need for this change," said Adjunct Professor Thoms.

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