

Consumer safety must be prioritised while managing access to Ozempic

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Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) understands why the TGA is proposing a ban on pharmacists compounding Ozempic but the supply issue for Australian consumers remains.

“What we are hearing from consumers is that ever since Ozempic has become better known as a rapid weight loss drug for celebrities, suddenly people living with conditions, like diabetes, who need the drug for medical purposes can’t get it. For some it’s almost like their supply has dried up overnight,” said CHF CEO Dr Elizabeth Deveny.

CHF is concerned that people do not realise they are essentially buying an unregulated product when they get a compounded version of medicines like Ozempic.

Whilst understanding people want access, we encourage them to have that conversation with their health professional to make sure any alternative they move to is safe and effective.

“Of course, compounding pharmacies are an important part of our healthcare system. Like every service they must be used safely, and in this case the TGA is saying that for mass distribution of Ozempic, it is not.

“Compounding pharmacies are great when people need individualised medicine. As compounding individualises medication, there are different processes used and different quality control mechanisms in place to what we are used to when we get a box of medication over the counter from a pharmacist and that's why we are comfortable with the call the TGA has made here,” said Dr Deveny.

While public safety must remain the primary consideration for medicines, CHF believes that there are other options available to the government to protect the public while also providing better access to Ozempic including:

- The Australian Government to continue to work with the state and territory governments to harmonise standards which audit and review compounding pharmacy services
- The Australian Government to continue its efforts to get more Ozempic into Australia, noting that this is a global supply issue
- The Australian Government to convene a roundtable of consumers, industry and clinicians to see how we can work together to find solutions to medication supply and use issues.

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