



Consumers Health Forum welcomes PBS price cut for essential medicines

Thursday 20 March 2025

The Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) has welcomed today's announcement, with bipartisan support, to reduce the maximum co-payment under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) to \$25 from January 2026.

CHF CEO Dr Elizabeth Deveny said this measure, which CHF has long called for, is a step towards alleviating cost pressures, with the price cut bringing meaningful relief to millions.

"This is a major win for Australian health consumers and something CHF has consistently advocated for," Dr Deveny said. "Every dollar matters when people are choosing between food, bills and essential medication, and this is a significant win for health consumers struggling with the rising cost of living.

"What we have heard from consumers ever since the rise in cost-of-living is that they have had to choose between paying for essentials or filling their prescriptions. Today's announcement will ease the burden for millions.

"Helping Australians better afford their medicine provides people with dignity and health provides better health outcomes including preventing avoidable hospital admissions. It benefits the entire system."

Dr Deveny also said there was more work to do to improve the overall PBS, including automating its safety net scheme.

"Right now, we know many Australians miss out on savings they are eligible for under the PBS because of outdated systems. By automating this scheme, like Medicare, the onus won't be on consumers and pharmacists to help make medicines more affordable," Dr Deveny said.

Dr Deveny warned many Australians still don't fully understand how medicine pricing works under the PBS.

"The PBS is complex and most people don't realise there are multiple payment tiers based on personal circumstance," Dr Deveny said.

Under the PBS, medication costs vary based on whether a person holds a concession card, has reached the PBS Safety Net threshold, or is purchasing a medicine priced below the standard co-payment.



Confusion between these can mean people miss out on discounts they are entitled to.

“Too many consumers don’t know what to expect when they get to the pharmacy counter, or how to make the most of PBS benefits,” Dr Deveny said.

“Without better public information and modernised systems, people will continue to fall through the cracks. Australians deserve to know what’s available to them.”