

A new approach to support specialist prescribing of bDMARDs

A new grant to improve the use of biologic disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (bDMARDs) will see NPS MedicineWise and consortium partners support specialist prescribers and help consumers get the most benefit from these complex medicines.

A consortium of health organisations has been awarded the grant under the Australian Government's Value in Prescribing program bDMARDs stream.

NPS MedicineWise CEO Adj A/Prof Steve Morris says the project will improve use of bDMARDs through a consortium approach, meaning key stakeholders will be working together in a collaborative way to ensure high quality healthcare for people taking these medicines.

"bDMARDs are a class of medicine that have made a significant improvement in the management of chronic diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease and chronic dermatological conditions," said Mr Morris.

"The consortium members will work closely with other relevant stakeholders to ensure the best possible health and economic outcomes from investment in these therapies," said Mr Morris.

Arthritis Australia CEO Andrew Mills says this project is a great opportunity to optimise the benefits that people with conditions like rheumatoid arthritis are getting from their medicines.

"The project will develop and deliver resources, tools and interventions to empower people to discuss their medicines with their doctor as part of a shared decision-making approach," said Mr Mills.

Australian Rheumatology Association spokesperson Professor Catherine Hill said this is a true collaboration led by specialists, pharmacists and consumers.

"I look forward to working with the consortium to develop a service that will provide targeted synthesised evidence and real-world Australian data to help clinicians take steps to improve management of their patients who take these medicines, benefiting those patients as well as the broader community," said Professor Hill.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) CEO Dr Shane Jackson said the interventions developed for this program will further assist pharmacist decision-making.

"The project will not only increase collaboration between health practitioners, but also provide improved patient support and an increased focus on safe and quality use of these complex medicines," said Dr Jackson.

Led by NPS MedicineWise, the consortium consists of:

- Australia and New Zealand Musculoskeletal (ANZMUS) Clinical Trials Network
- Australian Rheumatology Association
- Arthritis Australia
- Cochrane Musculoskeletal
- Council of Australian Therapeutic Advisory Groups
- NPS MedicineWise
- Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
- Quality Use of Medicines and Pharmacy Research Centre at the University of South Australia
- The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia

The bDMARDs grant is \$8.4 million over three years until June 2022.

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