

***MEDIA RELEASE***

**FRIDAY 28 APRIL 2023**

## **Arthritis Australia welcomes proposals to reduce the cost of medicines**

Arthritis Australia has welcomed proposals to decrease the cost of medicines and improve accessibility for people with arthritis.

Currently, people with chronic conditions, including arthritis, need to visit their doctor every six months for scripts even when they have been on their medication long term, and can only receive 30 days' supply from their pharmacy at a time.

The measures will allow a 60-day supply of some arthritis medicines to be dispensed, with consumers potentially saving \$180 a year. It will also allow doctors to provide one prescription for 12 months, reducing the number of appointments required.

Arthritis Australia CEO Jonathan Smithers said "People with arthritis face very high out of pocket costs to manage their condition, which is particularly challenging with current cost-of-living pressures, and are increasingly struggling to access medical appointments when they need them.

"While we know this community highly values the services provided by their doctor and community pharmacy, when you are living with pain and disability from arthritis it can be hard to make those extra trips to the pharmacy or the doctor.

"Any measures that save consumers cost and difficulty in accessing medicines need to be seriously considered. A saving of \$180 a year will make a real difference for many people.

"However, it is vital that all stakeholders work together to ensure a smooth transition. Consumers need to be actively involved in planning and managing this change. We also want to see the right information and support available for people who will be affected."

The measures will apply to a range of arthritis medicines recommended by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee, for people whose condition is stable if their doctor agrees it is appropriate.

### **About Arthritis Australia**

Arthritis Australia is the peak national body for arthritis, advocating on behalf of over 3.6 million Australians living with arthritis, and working with many other arthritis organisations to deliver information and support to people living with more than 100 types of arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions. We are a leading non-government funder of arthritis research in Australia and advocate for policies, programs and funding initiatives that will improve the health and wellbeing of people living with arthritis.

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