



APP 2019 | APP 2019 NEWS | APP 2019 VIDEOS | NEWS | POLITICAL

# HUNT: NEW TRIAL, SHORTER PAYMENT TIMES



SHESHTYN PAOLA 07/03/2019



03:42



## Health Minister solidifies support for community pharmacy, announcing new \$5 million mental

# health trial program, reduced PBS payment times and guaranteed AHI rates at APP2019

Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt has reaffirmed his support for the community pharmacy, announcing several initiatives at APP2019 conference at the Gold Coast on Thursday.

He announced a new \$5 million mental health trial program that he hopes will roll out nationally in the future.

The trial will roll out across three states and territories initially, with a tentative start date set for 1 July 2019.

“What does that program mean? It means that you will be given support to provide greater adherence to those patients who are managing medications for their mental health challenges,” said Minister Hunt.

“We know in any one year, four million Australians will face those challenges and so this will give you more information and more capacity to help those patients at their time of greatest need.

“My belief is that this trial will be successful and my guarantee is that presuming that is the case, we will then roll it out nationally and make it available to every pharmacy in Australia.”



*Greg Hunt addresses delegates at APP2019.*

*Image: AJP*

Minister Hunt also announced the government will be moving to reduce times for PBS payment schedules from 9-16 days down to 2-9 days.

These are expected to commence from April 2019.

“Very simply, that means better cash flow and the Commonwealth ensuring that your payments arrive earlier.”

The Minister announced further Commonwealth funding of \$200 million through to mid 2023 to guarantee the higher rate of the Administration, Handling and Infrastructure fee (AHI fee).

“You now have security for four years and a \$200 million additional investment in the AHI fee which will underpin your revenues going forward.”

The minister highlighted the “critical role” of pharmacists in increasing herd immunity across the community through vaccinations.

He said that in going to the COAG meeting for health ministers this week, “one of the matters I will be raising is urging those states that have not provided NIP access for vaccination to pharmacists to do so”.

“In 2017, sadly 1150 people lost their lives. In 2018 where there was the dramatic expansion of herd immunity through your programs and the programs of others, that dropped by 90% to just over to 100 people – so when we say that you are saving lives and protecting lives you really are. The facts are there and the outcomes are recognised, and measured in lives saved and lives protected.”

Minister Hunt will also be bringing up real-time monitoring at the COAG meeting.

“Real-time monitoring is absolutely critical to saving lives. Our national railroad is in place, Victoria is leading the country in terms of that, Queensland is lagging the country unfortunately,” he told *AJP* at the event.

“We’re going to work with all of the states to get them to do that as quickly as possible. Everything that [the national government] needed to do is done, we just need to get them to adopt and to put the trains on the tracks.”

He said as small businesses, community pharmacies would benefit from the government’s reduction of the tax rate, moving from a 30% tax rate, now to 27.5%, and within two years to 25%.

“That will make it easier for you to conduct your business. At the same time we’ve expanded the instant asset write off from \$20,000 to \$25,000, and taken it out to 2020.”

Minister Hunt promised that under his watch there would be no vending machines replacing pharmacists, or federal licences being granted for pharmacy in supermarkets.

“In my time, no vending machines and no supermarket licences, that’s a commitment now and through the 7CPA, and as long as we are involved in leadership in this space.”

## OUR PARTNERS



GOLD SPONSOR



---

Previous

**Hunt begins for top pharmacy assistant**

---

Next

**Pharmacy of the Year unveiled**