

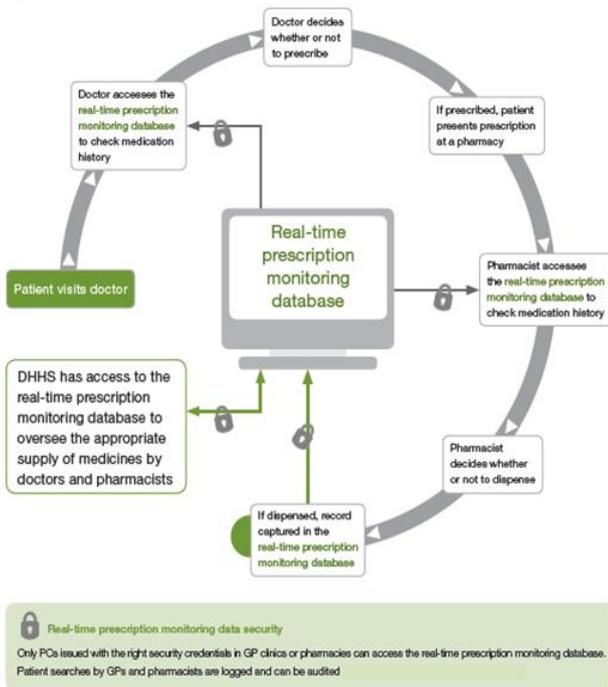
Real-time prescription monitoring

Frequently Asked Questions – for health professionals

Q: What is a real-time prescription monitoring system?

A: A real-time prescription monitoring system is computer software that allows pharmacy dispensing records for certain medicines to be transmitted in real-time to a centralised database which can then be accessed by doctors and pharmacists during a consultation.

Real-time prescription monitoring will provide doctors and pharmacists with a clinical tool to help make safer clinical decisions, stop patients who are prescription shopping, and facilitate the early identification and referral of patients who are developing signs of addiction to counselling and more appropriate treatment.



Q: What information is recorded in the system?

A: Existing information which is already provided by doctors and recorded by pharmacies when a prescription is written and dispensed will be recorded in the real-time prescription monitoring system. These include: patient name, address, details of medicines

supplied (name, strength and quantity), and doctor and pharmacy details.

Q: What medicines will be included in the system?

A: Based on the latest international and local research and recommendations from the project expert advisory group, the system will monitor prescription medicines that are causing the greatest harm to the Victorian community.

These include all Schedule 8 medicines, such as oxycodone, morphine, alprazolam, methylphenidate and dexamphetamine. Other medicines to be monitored include all benzodiazepines such as diazepam, 'Z-drugs' such as zolpidem, as well as quetiapine. Codeine will also be monitored, but it will be included at a later stage. This will allow clinicians time to adjust to the rescheduling of over the counter codeine products to prescription only by the Therapeutic Goods Administration from February 2018.

Further information about evidence-based literature review regarding inclusion of medicines to be monitored is available on the real-time prescription monitoring site.

Q: How will information be entered into the real-time prescription monitoring system?

A: When a prescription is dispensed at the pharmacy, the dispensing record created by the pharmacy's dispensing software will be automatically transferred to the real-time prescription monitoring system. No additional data entry will be necessary to record a dispensing event.

Q: How do I view records from my medical clinic or pharmacy?

A: Doctors and pharmacists will be able to log on to a secure web portal using an internet browser to view a patient's dispensing history. Over time, the real-time prescription monitoring software will further be developed to integrate with prescribing and dispensing systems as seamlessly as practicable.

As with any software, it is important for the system to be as straightforward as possible for users. Planning will be very focused on ensuring that the most user-friendly system will be implemented that links pharmacy dispensing histories in real-time across 1,900 medical clinics, 1,300 pharmacies and 200 hospitals in Victoria.

Q: What training will be provided to clinicians?

A: A key component of this initiative is the provision of training and development programs for doctors and pharmacists to ensure successful uptake of the system. This includes:

- safe and appropriate prescribing of high risk medicines
- drug counselling skills and engaging in conversations with patients around prescription medicine misuse and tapering of prescription medicines
- how information in the RTPM system may be used to inform clinical decisions and regulatory obligations

The Victorian Government has engaged Western Victoria Primary Health Network, as lead for a consortium comprising all Victorian Primary Health Networks and NPS MedicineWise, to develop and deliver this training.

Q: How will doctors and pharmacists access the training?

A: Both prescribers and pharmacists will be able to access online modules on demand as needed. Face-to-face training workshops will also be offered at local venues across Victoria. The locations will be determined based on priority and need. There will be no cost to doctors and pharmacists to complete this training.

Q: Will it be mandatory to check a patient's history before prescribing or dispensing a medicine?

A: In Australian first and following worldwide best practice, using the system to check a patient's dispensing history will be mandatory before prescribing or dispensing a medicine monitored by the system.

This will ensure Victorians will gain the maximum benefit from a real-time prescription monitoring system, and that as many harms and deaths from prescription medicine misuse can be prevented from the start of the implementation.

Q: Will the real-time prescription monitoring system be implemented nationally?

A: With the harms and deaths from prescription medicine misuse increasing, Victoria needs action now. Ensuring that the system is fit for purpose and delivered on time is Victoria's top priority.

Victoria has been and will continue to work with the Commonwealth to ensure that we have a solution that enable us to share data to prevent some of the cross-border issues associated with prescription shopping.

Q: How will this initiative impact current arrangements for prescribing and dispensing for these medicines in Victoria?

A: As part of the implementation of real-time prescription monitoring, the arrangements for treatment permits and notification requirements for prescribing Schedule 8 medicines will be comprehensively reviewed and streamlined to take advantage of the information available in the system to assist prescribers to coordinate treatment.

Q: Why can't the myHealth Record be used for real-time prescription monitoring?

A: The myHealth Record is a patient-controlled summary of a patient's health record, in which patients can choose what is included and who can view their medication history.

The real-time prescription monitoring system is different because it will allow doctors and pharmacists involved in a patient's care access to a complete record of high risk medicines that have been supplied. Noting that these are high risk medicines subject to misuse, patients will not be able to opt-out or restrict what medication history can be viewed.

Q: When will the system commence?

A: Real-time prescription monitoring is a priority project for the Victorian Government. While work towards implementation will proceed as fast as possible, we are also taking the necessary steps to ensure the system is implemented in the most effective way.

The system is scheduled to be rolled out in phases commencing in 2018.

Q: Where can I get further information?

A: Further information is available on the Department of Health and Human Services website, or click [here](#).

The Real-Time Prescription Monitoring Implementation team can be contacted on 9096 5633 or via email rtpm@dhhs.vic.gov.au.