

REAL-TIME PRESCRIPTION MONITORING PROGRAM

112. Ms E.L. HAMILTON to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to invest in modern health technologies to keep the community safe. Can the minister advise the house how the launch of the real-time prescription monitoring in WA will reduce harm caused by controlled prescription medication?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I thank the member for Joondalup for her question.

I was very pleased to announce that, from the end of this month, 28 March, WA Health will roll out our real-time prescription monitoring program for controlled drugs, with an early focus on opioids and stimulants. We all know that doctor shopping is not a new phenomenon and is also incredibly dangerous. People who are suffering from addiction to certain prescription medications are going from doctor to doctor to seek support. It also takes up an enormous amount of time for health services, particularly out-of-hours health services, that have to support people who present with obvious addiction issues and are seeking prescriptions.

This is a first for WA. It will support our clinicians, pharmacies and those who are seeking support or are struggling with addiction. ScriptCheckWA will be trialled for the use of controlled drugs, and a select number of doctors and pharmacists are now ready for the state rollout. It will allow 20 000 medical practitioners, pharmacists, nurse practitioners and dentists to monitor, in real time, the prescribing and dispensing of those schedule 8 drugs. The kinds of drugs that will be flagged are opioids, cannabis-based products and other controlled drugs that treat pain and anxiety conditions. The system will give practitioners seamless communication and will allow for pharmacists and doctors to offer support to those who are engaging in the practice of doctor shopping when seeking medications. We know that prescription overdose is real. We know that mixing prescription medications is dangerous. We are seeing an increase in doctor shopping across Australia, and over the years we are seeing an increase in prescription overdose not only in Australia, but also around the world. ScriptCheckWA will be one of the ways that we will support clinicians, pharmacists and our community when managing addictions.