



**Chronic Pain**  
AUSTRALIA

## **Frequently asked questions about Real Time Prescription Monitoring**

### **What is Real Time Prescription Monitoring?**

Real Time Prescription Monitoring (RTPM) is a new national digital health system currently being established across Australia. It is an online database that allows doctors and pharmacists to access patient information regarding the prescription of controlled or high risk medications such as opioids and benzodiazepines.

### **What is the purpose of RTPM?**

RTPM was initially recommended as a solution to increasing numbers of people being harmed by misuse of prescription medications. The purpose of RTPM is to enable rapid identification of patients at risk of harm due to drug interaction or dependence whilst also minimising illegal and off-label use of medicines.

### **Where is it being implemented?**

RTPM systems have been implemented in other countries across the world. Whilst the Australian programme is ultimately managed by the Commonwealth Government, each Australian State and Territory is building their own database and adapting local policies to incorporate RTPM into their own health services.

### **What medicines will be monitored?**

Prescription medicines shown to cause significant harm through misuse will be monitored through RTPM. Whilst the list of monitored medicines does differ slightly in each State and Territory, they typically include –

- Opioid medications such as codeine, oxycodone, tramadol, morphine and fentanyl
- Benzodiazepenes such as diazepam, temazepam and lorazepam
- Nerve-pain agents such as gabapentin and pregabalin
- Psychiatric and sedative medications such as quetiapine, zolpidem and zopiclone
- Some prescription cannabis-based products

### **What information is recorded?**

Whilst the information recorded on the RTPM also differs slightly in each State/Territory, it typically includes -

- Your name
- Your address
- Prescriber and dispensing pharmacy details
- Details of the monitored medication that has been prescribed



- General health information and information about your use of medicines that are not on the ‘monitored medicines’ list should not be included on the RTPM system.

### **Can I ‘opt-out’ of the RTPM?**

Unlike the current Australian My Health Record system, participation in RTPM is compulsory for all people prescribed controlled medications and you are not able to “opt-out”. Furthermore, prescribing doctors and dispensing pharmacists who are directly involved in your care do not need your permission to access your prescription history.

However, it is important to emphasise that your personal and health information is protected by State and Federal laws and you do have the right to obtain access to your own records and request corrections where necessary. Inappropriate use by a practitioner may result in both professional and criminal penalties.

### **Will RTPM limit my access to the pain medications I need?**

The RTPM **should not** reduce your access to critical medications. We understand that many of these controlled medications are helpful for the chronic pain community, and that the majority of people who use these medications are doing so safely. CPA are advocating on the behalf of the chronic pain community to ensure that access to these critical medications is not reduced when there is a true medical need for their use.

### **Where can I find out more about RTPM?**

More information about the real time prescription monitoring programme being rolled out across the country can be found at the links below. You might also like to read through the recent CPA submission made to the NSW Government.

<https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/national-real-time-prescription-monitoring-rtpm>

<https://www.nps.org.au/australian-prescriber/articles/real-time-prescription-monitoring-helping-people-at-risk-of-harm>

<https://adf.org.au/reducing-risk/pharmaceuticals/real-time-monitoring/>

