



Hon Lawrence Springborg MP
Minister for Health

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Level 19
147-163 Charlotte Street Brisbane 4000
GPO Box 48 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3234 1191
Facsimile +61 7 3229 4731
Email health@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 2023-12, tabled in Parliament on 28 November 2012, in relation to the Malanda Methadone Clinic and needle and syringe disposal.

The Queensland Opioid Treatment Program (QOTP) provides methadone or buprenorphine to patients who are opioid dependent as part of an overall program including medication, counselling and relapse prevention. It has been clearly shown that treatment with methadone or buprenorphine reduces the risk of overdose, reduces the rate of injecting and improves the health and well-being of the patient.

Patients are admitted voluntarily to the QOTP and once stable are able to obtain their medication on a daily basis at a local pharmacy close to their home or workplace. Opioid dependence is a medical condition, and, as with other medical conditions medication is made available through a local community pharmacy to improve access to treatment. Patients are required to pay for their medication on a weekly basis, often considerably more than patients obtaining prescription medications. Approximately 350 pharmacies across the state, in small and large towns and cities, participate in this program. Some patients are provided with take-home medication once stable on the program. Queensland Health encourages all pharmacies to be involved with programs such as this as the skill and clinical abilities of the pharmacists is essential in assisting to manage these patients.


The Malanda Pharmacy has been involved in this program for a number of years and this has greatly assisted patients to be able to maintain a normal lifestyle while still receiving treatment for their medical condition. Patients on the QOTP in Malanda are regularly reviewed by their prescribing medical practitioner at the Cairns Alcohol and Drug Service to ensure they are complying with the requirements of the program.

The Queensland Needle and Syringe Program (QNSP) provide needles and syringes through dedicated primary programs and community pharmacies. When needles and syringes are provided, disposal containers are also given to the clients and most pharmacies also now provide large disposal bins on their premises. Injecting drug users are actively advised to dispose of their equipment appropriately.

Local councils are responsible for the disposal of any needles and syringes found in the community. The general public can contact the 'Clean Needle Helpline' (1800NEEDLE) if they find needles and syringes. The helpline is able to give advice about appropriate disposal or will contact the local council on behalf of the public. Members of the public have been advised that Malanda Council is able to remove any needles and syringes found in the area.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely



LAWRENCE SPRINGBORG MP
Minister for Health