

# Media Release



**Martin Foley MP**

Minister for Housing, Disability & Ageing  
Minister for Mental Health  
Minister for Creative Industries  
Minister for Equality

Thursday, 23 February, 2017

## **SAVING LIVES – PREVENTING AND TREATING OVERDOSE**

The Andrews Labor Government is improving access to life-saving Naloxone and strengthening support for overdose survivors to help reduce the number of people dying of drug overdoses across Victoria.

Minister for Mental Health Martin Foley made the announcement during a keynote address on National Family Drug Support Day, which aims to raise awareness of the pain, anguish and challenges faced by families of drug users.

The \$1.3 million package will subsidise the cost of Naloxone to drug users or families struggling to afford it and provide an outreach service to personally follow up drug users who have survived an overdose.

Naloxone is a lifesaving medication that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose and allow time for an ambulance to attend. Expanding training and distribution of naloxone to peers, families and communities is an important part of strengthening Victoria's response to overdose.

At present, the cost of purchasing naloxone over-the-counter can be prohibitive, costing up to \$100. The Government will subsidise the cost of this important medication, expanding its availability to more Victorians in need.

Research shows overdose survivors are especially vulnerable to further overdose, that is why an outreach support service for overdose survivors is important in preventing future overdoses that could be fatal.

The service will operate in the same areas as our Peer Based Workers Program which focuses on six overdose hotspots in Yarra, Melbourne, Port Phillip, Geelong, Dandenong and Brimbank/Maribyrnong.

The Labor Government will also develop an education campaign that will provide information and advice to drug users at locations such as needle and syringe outlets and health services.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Martin Foley**

*"No one wants to see a family member or a friend suffer the horrors of addiction – licit or illicit."*

*"This investment will help make Naloxone more affordable and provide more people with the skills to identify and respond to overdose."*

*"We will continue to invest in a range of community based responses to reduce the harm associated with drug use."*