



Raising drug dependency awareness

HEALTH Region

WIMMERA Drug Action Taskforce is expanding its efforts to prevent harms associated with prescription medication use.

Taskforce representatives will host a stand in Horsham Plaza on May 16 from 10am to 1pm to encourage community members to discuss the safe use of medications such as opioids and benzodiazepines. They will also be able to discuss Naloxone and how community are able to access it locally.

The pop-up stand is a part of ScriptWise's inaugural National Prevention of Prescription Medication Dependence Week, which will run from May 14 to 18.

Taskforce co-ordinator Sally Pymer said community education was essential to

prevent prescription medication harms.

"By increasing knowledge about the risks associated with using potentially addictive medications long-term, we can empower community members to make the right decisions for their health," she said.

"Prevention Week is a great opportunity to talk with community members about the many effective ways to manage their pain without opioids, and to discuss what to do if they are concerned about their medication use."

The week also aims to promote existing prevention efforts in Australia and encourage the federal government to invest in a national public awareness campaign.

ScriptWise is a non-profit organisation dedicated to preventing the harms associ-

ated with prescription medication use and misuse.

ScriptWise chief executive officer Bee Mohamed said more education of both the public and health professionals was necessary to address the root causes of the issue.

"Preventative efforts such as better education and increased access to early intervention services are critical to prevent further harm within local communities," she said. "We know that regional and rural areas have been hit harder by increasing rates of opioid overdose, and it is very heartening to see community groups taking action to address this."

For five consecutive years, more Victorians have died due to prescription medication-related overdose than on the roads.



RAISING AWARENESS: Wimmera Drug Action Taskforce co-ordinator Sally Pymer warns the community about the dangers of prescription drug dependency. File photo.