

MEDIA RELEASE

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WOUNDS AUSTRALIA CALLS FOR ACTION ON OUT OF POCKET COSTS

The peak body for wound care & management, Wounds Australia, is calling on the Australian Government to urgently act on reducing out of pocket costs of wound care.

CEO of Wounds Australia Blake Wilson says the high costs of treating wounds is contributing to a massive health crisis.

That's why the organisation is using Wound Awareness Week (15 to 21 July) to draw much needed attention to the impact and financial burden of chronic wounds.

Around 500,000 Australians suffer from wounds every day. Over 420,000 people develop a chronic wound each year. The cost to the health system is at least \$3 billion annually.

As Australia's population continues to age, the number of sufferers and associated costs is expected to soar because people aged 65 or older are most at risk of developing chronic wounds.

"The average individual cost to Australians with a chronic wound can be as much as \$340 a month. Some wounds take months or even years to heal, and often people facing these costs are pensioners or on fixed incomes," Blake Wilson said.

"Without access to the proper treatment and wound care products, a wound takes longer to heal and the risk of complications increases. This means people suffer needlessly for longer and may eventually place an unnecessary burden on our hospital or aged care systems.

"While the financial cost of chronic wounds is massive, the good news is small changes to how the government manages out of pocket costs will deliver results.

"Wounds Australia research shows strategies such as a subsidy program for venous leg ulcer compression therapy will improve care and could save up to \$166 million each year.

"This is a saving of 50 per cent on current treatment and costs on its own.

"Imagine what could be achieved by adopting our 5 Point Plan that uses evidence-based strategies to tackle the growing chronic wounds crisis before it grows to crisis levels," Blake Wilson said.

More information on Wounds Australia and its 5 Point Plan is at www.woundsaustralia.com.au

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