

# Time for Change –

## How consumers can be ready for the rescheduling of alprazolam by 1 February 2014

**This fact sheet provides information for consumers about the upcoming changes in the way alprazolam will be prescribed from 1 February 2014.**

### **What you need to know:**

Alprazolam is a benzodiazepine drug most commonly used in the treatment of panic disorder and short term treatment of anxiety; you may know it as Xanax<sup>®</sup>, Kalma<sup>®</sup> or Ralozam<sup>®</sup>.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), Australia's regulator of therapeutic agents determined that alprazolam does not appear to have any additional therapeutic benefits compared to other similar medicines, and that there is evidence relating to the harms associated with the misuse. For example, alprazolam can be habit forming and can interact with other drugs which may increase their sedative effects and place people at risk of overdose.

For this reason and to promote safe and appropriate use of alprazolam:

- > From 1 February 2014 there will be a change to the way alprazolam is prescribed and supplied throughout all of Australia which your doctor and pharmacist are legally required to follow.
- > This national change to the way alprazolam is prescribed by your doctor means that for ongoing treatment with this medicine your doctor will require input from a specialist and a special authority.
- > Anxiety and panic disorder can be treated in various ways, it may be appropriate to revisit the range of options now available by talking with your doctor. Don't wait until February 2014, or when you run out of your tablets, make an appointment today to speak to your doctor about the range of treatment options available.
- > Even if you are prescribed alprazolam for a different reason, you should speak to your doctor about the range treatment of options available.
- > If you are caring for a person who is prescribed alprazolam consider arranging for them to see their doctor to talk about the different treatment options available.
- > It may be illegal for your doctor to continue to prescribe alprazolam from 1 February 2014 without a statutory authority.

### **Help is available:**

#### **To learn more about the different treatment options available:**

- > Panic disorder and agoraphobia, Australian treatment guide for consumers and carers, RANZCP, August 2009  
[http://www.ranzcp.org/Files/ranzcp-attachments/Resources/Publications/CPG/Australian\\_Versions/AUS\\_Panic\\_disorder-pdf.aspx](http://www.ranzcp.org/Files/ranzcp-attachments/Resources/Publications/CPG/Australian_Versions/AUS_Panic_disorder-pdf.aspx)
- > Beyond Blue:  
[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

#### **For telephone counselling and advice contact:**

- > Alcohol & Drug Information Service on 1300 13 1340

**To learn more about the reasons for the scheduling change:** [www.tga.gov.au](http://www.tga.gov.au)

---

For more information

**Drugs of Dependence Unit  
Medicines and Technology Policy  
and Programs  
Telephone: 1300 652 584  
[www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/  
drugsofdependence](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/drugsofdependence)**

© Department for Health and Ageing, Government of South Australia.  
All rights reserved. FIS: 13107.C Printed October 2013.



[www.ausgoal.gov.au/creative-commons](http://www.ausgoal.gov.au/creative-commons)



**Government  
of South Australia**

SA Health