



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health
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MEDIA RELEASE

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Additional support for treatment of polio survivors

The Turnbull Government is providing funding of \$450,000 to Polio Australia to run clinical practice workshops for health professionals to improve their awareness of post-polio syndrome.

A greater professional understanding of the symptoms associated with the late effects of polio may lead to improvements in the quality of life experienced by Australians with the condition.

We are fortunate today in Australia that many young people have had limited or no first-hand experience with polio and its crippling effects, thanks to vaccination programs that have largely eradicated the virus from our shores.

But the earlier epidemics in the late 1930s, early 1940s and 1950s affected up to four million Australians to varying degrees, with up to 40,000 people infected by the severe paralytic polio virus.

This funding will particularly benefit polio survivors who experience late effects of the illness, which can occur up to 40 years after their initial infection.

These symptoms of fatigue, muscle weakness, joint pain, and sleeping, breathing or swallowing difficulties are often confused with other medical conditions, meaning some patients may not receive the right treatment and support.

Polio Australia's clinical practice workshops will provide up to 1,200 primary and allied health professionals with an opportunity to learn more about the effects of this illness, particularly if it recurs later in a patient's life.

The workshops will be held in various locations around Australia and will be open to GPs, nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, podiatrists and orthotists.

The information shared through these sessions will allow these health professionals to properly diagnose the condition and better manage the symptoms of this condition, allowing polio survivors to maintain their independence for as long as possible.

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