Patients suffering chronic diseases will benefit from the launch of a new website that offers easier access to clinical trials of new drugs, treatments and medical procedures.

The Minister for Health, Tanya Plibersek, today said that the Australian Clinical Trials website was created in response to the needs of consumer groups, the pharmaceutical industry and research institutions.

“Clinical trials give tens of thousands of patients access to new and innovative treatments and play a vital part in the fight against disease,” Ms Plibersek said.

“There are many stories about recovery, improved quality of life or longer life from participating in a clinical trial conducted in Australia and this website will make it easier for patients to find out about and access clinical trials.”

Minister for Innovation and Industry Greg Combet said that the Government is making it easier for patients to access information about medical research and this will lead to higher participation rates in clinical trials and increased investment in new medical innovations.

“The clinical research sector employs many highly skilled Australians and ensures Australian-developed therapies and technologies become commercialised,” Mr Combet said.

“This website will help the sector by providing information on many aspects of clinical trials such as the regulatory process, commonly used clinical trial registers and clinical trial networks. It will allow people who are interested in participating in a clinical trial to access relevant information more easily.”

Consumers Health Forum of Australia CEO, Carol Bennett said that consumer engagement in clinical trials is the basis to ensuring new medications and treatments meet real-world expectations without causing further harm.

“Consumers have a real interest in participating in these trials, but need access to
appropriate resources not only for themselves and their carers, but for their regular health professional, that can assist them in making informed decisions and understanding their rights,” Ms Bennett said.

The website is also supported by pharmaceutical and medical research stakeholders.

“Improving patient recruitment is one area where we can do more to boost clinical trial investment in Australia, so this announcement is good news. This website will make it easier for Australians to learn more about participating in clinical trials,” Medicines Australia CEO, Dr Brendan Shaw.

The Australian Clinical Trials website represents the continued work of implementing the recommendations of the Clinical Trials Action Group report, released in March 2011.

The National Health and Medical Research Council built the website, while funding of $40,000 was provided by the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education to support its development.

The Australian Clinical Trials website can be accessed at:  
www.australianclinicaltrials.gov.au

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