

Media release

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First Nations health programs must be delivered safely, fairly and appropriately

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has marked National Reconciliation Week by reiterating its support for investments into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, on the back of [funding wins announced in the 2024 Federal Budget](#), while alerting practitioners to key dates and ways to prepare for upcoming changes.

SHPA President Tom Simpson says that while recent First Nations health budget measures are certainly welcome, it is important that practitioners are trained to deliver the program in a culturally appropriate and safe manner, something that SHPA champions through its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Specialty Practice Group and collaboration with the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO).

‘The success of any health care rests on its cultural delivery and that’s why we joined with NACCHO last year to deliver education providing both an overview of the Closing The Gap registration process and specific ways practitioners can facilitate the program appropriately.

‘We have also received advice from the Department of Health and Aged Care that the expansion of the CTG PBS Copayment Program to Section 100 programs in community pharmacies and private hospitals will take effect from 1 July 2024, while the expansion of CTG PBS Copayment program to General Schedule PBS medicines and PBS medicines in Section 100 programs in public hospitals will take effect from 1 January 2025.

Mr Simpson says the recent significant expansion of the Closing the Gap PBS Copayment Program to cover all PBS medicines and to finally include public hospital pharmacies, is a testament to SHPA’s advocacy.

‘We have long-championed healthcare equity for First Nations people, and this advocacy complements our Reconciliation Action Plan, endorsed by Reconciliation Australia last October, to improve healthcare outcomes for Australia’s first peoples.

‘SHPA is committed to ensuring the advanced expertise of all pharmacy practitioners is harnessed to improve the lives of all Australians, safely, appropriately and fairly.’

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional organisation for the 6,100+ Hospital Pharmacists, and their Hospital Pharmacist Intern and Hospital Pharmacy Technician colleagues working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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