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Action needed in the West as hospital pharmacy workforce under strain

Hospital pharmacist shortages can and must be addressed to support safer care for patients says Advanced Pharmacy Australia (AdPha).

As WA hospital pharmacists enter their second week of industrial action, Advanced Pharmacy Australia (AdPha) says future care delivery is under threat without urgent changes.

AdPha supports the WA hospital pharmacy workforce, who for the first time are taking mass action as pharmacy departments to ask WA Health to reform career pathways and pay to help attract and retain their current and future workforce.

AdPha President Tom Simpson FANZCAP (Lead&Mgmt) says hospital pharmacy workforce shortages are real and that patients stand to lose the most if state governments don't act.

'Hospital pharmacists have always played a crucial role in ensuring the safe and quality use of medicines and providing clinical pharmacy services to West Australians when they are most unwell.

'They are working as part of an increasingly complex health system which has required the scope of their functions to evolve significantly.

'In WA alone, where current actions are taking place, there are 750 hospital pharmacists providing clinical services, manufacturing and dispensing of medications.

'They drive safer patient care through medication safety services to support medical and nursing colleagues, and maintain and improve systems for digital health such as e-prescribing. Every patient's journey is improved by hospital pharmacists and

technicians, whether they are by the bedside, in the pharmacy, or in governance and systems roles.

'Their impact on the health system and patient care should not be undervalued and it's high time hospital pharmacists were recognised for the expanded roles they now perform and awarded accordingly.'

Mr Simpson says state governments should reflect the contemporary reality of pharmacy practice through a pharmacy-specific award with more classifications.

'Having recently responded to the expansion of pharmacy practice through our new trading name of Advanced Pharmacy Australia, we would like to see similar progress from our state governments through their award agreements, most of which haven't changed in over two decades.'

'Hospital pharmacists are vital and without them, many hospitals would cease to function; we call on all state governments to recognise the invaluable role they play in patient care.'

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About Advanced Pharmacy Australia:

Formerly trading as the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia, or SHPA, Advanced Pharmacy Australia (AdPha) is the progressive voice of Australian pharmacists and technicians, built on 80 years of hospital innovation that puts people and patients first. AdPha supports all practitioners across hospitals, transitions of care, aged care and general practice to realise their full potential. We are the peak body committed to forging stronger connections in health care by extending advanced pharmacy expertise from hospitals to everywhere medicines are needed.

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