

# Media release

Tuesday 7 September 2021

## SHPA welcomes new agreements as boost for medicines supply and sustainability

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) welcomes Federal Health Minister, the Hon. Greg Hunt's announcement of renewed five-year Strategic Agreements between the Federal Government and both the Generic Biosimilar Medicines Association (GBMA) and Medicines Australia, as vital to protecting patients against medicines shortages and ensuring medicines are accessible, available and cost-efficient.

Announced this morning, the Strategic Agreement with GBMA commits to requiring pharmaceutical companies to hold four to six months' worth of critical medicines onshore, a policy called for by the hospital pharmacy sector to minimise disruption of care to Australia's most unwell patients.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says today's announcements by the Health Minister are a shot in the arm for Australia's medicines supply and sustainability.

'SHPA brought the issue of medicines shortages to national attention through our 2017 report [Medicine shortages in Australia: A snapshot of shortages in Australian hospitals](#), which prompted the legislation of a nationwide system for managing medicines supply on 1 January 2019, requiring mandatory reporting of medicines shortages by pharmaceutical companies.

'Just last year, SHPA's [COVID-19 Hospital Pharmacy Capacity Snapshots](#) revealed more supply was needed in our national medicines reserves to meet projected demands to treat Australians with COVID-19 on intensive care wards. Today, hospital pharmacists around the country, particularly in New South Wales and Victoria, have been accessing and dispensing sotrovimab and remdesivir from the National Medical Stockpile to treat hospitalised COVID-19 patients.

'On behalf of our members, who dedicate precious time to medicines shortage workarounds, we are very pleased to see the new GBMA agreement in place, which will help ensure hospital pharmacy teams are on the front foot managing supply issues well before they adversely affect any patients.'

Ms Michaels says SHPA welcomes commitment to the first independent review of Health Technology Assessment in nearly 30 years, with hospital pharmacy poised to provide sharp insight.

'As custodians of 23% of annual Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) expenditure – which includes 75% of S100 Highly Specialised Drugs Program Expenditure and the majority of S100 Efficient Funding of Chemotherapy – hospital pharmacists have expansive scope to advise on the cost effectiveness, safety and quality use of medicines in Australia.

'Today's review announcement, as part of the Medicines Australia agreement, is timely given both National Medicines Policy and Pharmaceutical Reform Agreements are currently being reviewed.

'Most medicines newly added to the PBS are supplied by pharmacists in our hospitals and, even before they receive registration in Australia and are subsequently listed on the PBS, they are used in hospitals by pharmacists either as clinical trial medicines or unapproved medicines for patients with rare diseases, cancers and complex conditions.

'SHPA welcomes improved horizon scanning on this important sustainability issue, to ensure Australians continue to have access to the newest and most effective medicines available around the world to treat complex diseases and conditions, with hospital pharmacists by their side delivering crucial face-to-face services to enhance the safe and effective use of medicines at the bedside.'

– ends –

**For more information contact:**

Susie Brown, Communications and Media Advisor  
[sbrown@shpa.org.au](mailto:sbrown@shpa.org.au) | 0437 119 286

**About SHPA**

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional, for-purpose organisation for leading pharmacists and pharmacy technicians 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.

[shpa.org.au](http://shpa.org.au) |   