

# Media release

Tuesday 11 May 2021

## Welcome support to leverage specialised expertise of hospital pharmacists in ‘recovery’ budget

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed growing focus on electronic medicines management and transitions of care for older Australians, continued focus on hospitals to support the COVID-19 vaccine program and pandemic preparedness through National Medical Stockpile investments, and nearly \$900m for new and amended listings on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) as the Federal Government delivered its second ‘pandemic budget’ tonight.

In the [Federal Budget 2021-22](#), defined by ensuring sustained economic and social recovery from the impacts of COVID-19, SHPA welcomed the Government’s record \$17.7b response to the Final Report into the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, 22% of which is aimed at increasing frontline care to aged care residents.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the response is an opportunity to scale and embed new clinical and service models in aged care informed by unique hospital pharmacy expertise and proven technological support, led by \$45.4m announced to roll out electronic medication charts to improve the safe use of medicines.

‘This funding will support the specialised role hospital pharmacists play liaising between hospitals and residential aged care to support the safe transition of patients.

‘Wherever possible, our members are already using Interim Residential Care Medication Administration Charts for residents moving from hospitals back to aged care facilities to make sure they are able to take their new medicines and avoid readmission. We look forward to the government’s plan to implement electronic National Residential Medication Charts to help reduce the number of unnecessary medicines prescribed and dispensed per resident in aged care.

‘This investment will help address an urgent need – between 2014 and 2019 hospital admissions from aged care residents increased by 20%, while emergency department (ED) admissions increased by 27% – and we reiterate our call to embed dedicated Geriatric Medicine Pharmacists as part of increasing provision of frontline care to aged care residents, to reduce medicines misuse and medication-related hospitalisations and injuries among older Australians.’

Ms Michaels welcomed a further \$510.8m for the *National Partnership on the COVID-19 Response for states and territories*, with hospital pharmacists an essential part of the surge workforce implementing Australia’s COVID-19 vaccine program.

‘Having supported the establishment of over 500 vaccine clinics in major hospitals from Phase 1a, hospital pharmacists have taken the lead in setting up and operating state-run high-throughput vaccination clinics across the country as the roll-out grows dramatically in scale.

'The importance of hospital pharmacy expertise to pandemic preparedness is clear through tonight's additional funding for the National Incident Centre and National Medical Stockpile. Our 2020 COVID-19 Preparedness survey demonstrated hospitals were not optimised to respond to the pandemic, despite their irreplaceable role in treatment and care as well as the vaccine roll-out – this funding will safeguard reliable supplies of essential PPE, pharmaceuticals and medical devices to respond swiftly to significant public health events.'

Ms Michaels says SHPA also welcomes \$878.7m for new and amended listings on the PBS, and indicative PBS investment totalling approximately \$43b over the next four years.

'As custodians of 23 per cent of PBS expenditure, hospital pharmacists are essential to ensuring the safe and optimal use of the scheme, which supports patient access to lifesaving medicines.

'We also warmly welcome the \$38.3m over five years announced to expand the Women's Leadership and Development Program. Our membership currently comprises 76% women pharmacists and technicians, while women lead 18 of SHPA's 27 Specialty Practice Leadership Committees shaping clinical practice and achievement, and gender equity is a core value of our organisation.'

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**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.

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