

Media release

Thursday 16 September 2021

SHPA calls for mandatory COVID-19 vaccination of hospital workers, rapid testing in high-risk areas

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has [joined calls for mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policies for all hospital workers](#), as well as rapid antigen testing for hospital workers in jurisdictions where COVID-19 is present in the community, as vaccine doses administered at Australia's state and territory run clinics reached the 10 million milestone today, almost half of the national total of over 23 million vaccines administered.

SHPA President Peter Fowler says there is an urgent need to protect hospital workers, patients and visitors as community transmission increases while the COVID-19 vaccination program continues.

'Mandating broader vaccination uptake will help protect hospital workers, regardless of their profession, from becoming seriously unwell with COVID-19.

'With the current outbreaks in New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT, there are cumulatively thousands of hospital workers who are currently isolating, or have had to recently isolate.

'Vaccination provides a powerful layer of protection, while reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This is crucial during this period of enormous strain on our frontline workers who are stretched by staffing state-run vaccination clinics in addition to maintaining core hospital services in a COVID-safe manner.

'SHPA celebrates our hospital pharmacist and technician members' efforts in state and territory clinics reaching the 10 million dose milestone today, but our efforts are far from over as we strive towards achieving 80% double dose vaccination targets across the country. The more we protect our members and their colleagues, the better resourced they are to continue Australia's largest public health initiative.'

SHPA joins a number of major national healthcare organisations and associations supporting a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy for employees or members, while mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policies for hospital workers have been announced across NSW Health, Queensland Health, WA Health and the Tasmanian Health Service.

Mr Fowler says rapid antigen testing for workers entering hospital premises is a powerful additional testing strategy in areas where COVID-19 is circulating in the community,

'This fast, on-the-spot testing will help us detect unknown infection in hospital staff, to further protect them, their teams and their patients.

'As the [National Plan to transition Australia's National COVID-19 Response](#) indicates, COVID-19 will be present in the community after we have reached our vaccination targets. As long as the risk of infection –

albeit lower – remains, we must use every tool at our disposal to protect the health and wellbeing of all Australians.’

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional, for-purpose organisation for over 5,200 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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