

Media release

Thursday 18 March 2021

Hospital pharmacists mark commitment to Closing the Gap

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has recommitted to meaningful initiatives supporting equitable medicines access and improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as the Closing the Gap campaign marks its thirteenth annual day of action today.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says [National Close the Gap Day](#) is more important than ever after a 2018 review showed a widening gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

'SHPA is committed to supporting equitable medicines access and we will continue to advocate for stronger inclusivity in the Closing the Gap - PBS Co-payment Measure that allows public hospital pharmacists to support quality pharmacy care and medicines adherence for Indigenous patients discharging from hospital.

'This year's [#CloseTheGap](#) theme "Leadership and legacy through crises" resonates strongly as the COVID-19 vaccination program ramps up across Australia.

'Everyone deserves the right to a healthy future and the opportunities this affords, and hospital pharmacists across the country are pivotal to the vaccination effort, which will see the first cohort of Indigenous patients eligible as part of Phase 1b, beginning next week.'

Ms Michaels says the leadership of SHPA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Leadership Committee is shaping profession-wide initiatives.

'Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health stream now has more than 160 members, whose expertise is crucial to informing Closing the Gap initiatives across SHPA's other 29 Specialty Practice groups.

'The rapidly developing work of leading hospital pharmacists in this space is not constrained to particular disciplines – one such initiative sees leadership committees of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Transitions of Care and Primary Care collaborating to improve outcomes in this crucial care setting, while we continue to collaborate across fields through representation on both the National Rural Health Alliance Council and the Rural Health and Medical Research (Spinifex) Network.

'SHPA continues to work with the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) on policy priorities that improve healthcare access and outcomes for Indigenous patients,

and we were proud to receive NACCHO's support and representation on the advisory board for a Medical Research Future Fund research proposal that aims to address support better medication management practices at the transitions of care to prevent avoidable readmissions to hospital.

'While there is one highlighted day of action, commitment to the cause is year-round and we will continue to support our members identifying and delivering Closing the Gap projects, which are shaped by their experiences providing care.'

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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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