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AdPha applauds health-focused budget to expand primary care access and lower medicine costs

Albanese Government puts health in the spotlight with cost-of-living measures to improve patient care

Advanced Pharmacy Australia (AdPha) tonight welcomes the Albanese Government's 2025-26 Budget, with a focus on improving access to doctors, expanding pharmacy services and reducing medicine costs, while reiterating the need to invest in the advanced pharmacy workforce to ensure patient safety and maximise the impact of hospital investments on patient outcomes.

Delivered by Treasurer Dr Jim Chalmers, the 2025-26 Labor Budget outlines several cost-of-living health measures to make it easier and more affordable for Australians to receive care, and includes a \$1.8 billion increase in public hospital spending, bringing total 2025-26 investment in public hospitals to \$33.9 billion.

AdPha welcomes the \$689 million investment to reduce the general PBS co-payment to \$25, and \$1.8 billion for new and amended PBS listings, including medicines for cancer treatment, arthritis, menopause, endometriosis and other health conditions.

AdPha President Tom Simpson FANZCAP (Lead&Mgmt) says a reduction in the cost of PBS medicines is a welcome complement to the government's \$7.9 billion commitment to increase GP bulk-billing incentives.

'We supported the boost to GP bulk-billing when it was announced earlier in the year, while cautioning that more Australians will continue to end up in hospitals unnecessarily if the cost of medicines is not also addressed.'

'Tonight, it is great to see the Albanese Government confirm the reduction in the PBS general co-payment to \$25 - the lowest it has been in over two decades - complementing other changes this government has made to dispensing quantities and safety net thresholds, making medicines cheaper and more affordable for Australians.'

'The \$793 million women's health package aimed at reproductive health and menopause will importantly see continued expansion of pharmacists' scope of practice.

'AdPha members from our Women's and Newborn Health Specialty Practice Group highlighted medicines access issues at Senate inquiries into reproductive health and menopause in this term of Parliament, and we acknowledge the Albanese Government for hearing the call from our expert members and taking action.

'As our members have been dealing with IV fluid shortages over the past year, we are also pleased the Government has listened to our calls for more domestic manufacturing capacity.

'The \$22.9 million investment over five years from 2024–25 to expand onshore IV fluid production capacity and establish a panel of suppliers will ensure ongoing availability of these crucial products for care in our cancer services, intensive care units and emergency departments.'

Mr Simpson acknowledges the \$662.6 million investment in growing the primary care workforce but warns it fails to address the critical pharmacy workforce crisis. Government analysis confirms shortages are experienced in almost every jurisdiction, with the situation even more severe in regional areas.

'Every Australian deserves access to a full team of healthcare experts.

'Investment in new PBS-listed medicines is key to keeping Australian hospitals world class, but must be matched with investment into our specialised, advanced pharmacy workforce to ensure innovative treatments are used safely and effectively.

'Investing in pharmacists is just as vital as investing in doctors and nurses – without it, patient care will suffer.

'As the scope of practice for pharmacists continues to expand through Commonwealth or state-based programs and initiatives – such as in the treatment of uncomplicated urinary tract infections and supply of oral contraceptives in this Budget – we must continue to grow the pharmacy workforce so more Australians can benefit from these services, and not just those living in metropolitan areas.'

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About Advanced Pharmacy Australia:

Advanced Pharmacy Australia (AdPha) is the progressive voice of Australian pharmacists and technicians, built on more than 80 years of hospital innovation that puts the patient at the centre of everything we do. AdPha supports all pharmacy practitioners, working with interdisciplinary teams across hospitals and health services, 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. adpha.au