SHPA welcomes wins for NSW patients as 30-day medicine supply at hospital discharge moves closer

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed long-awaited support from the NSW Government to partner with the Commonwealth to enable 30-days' medicines supply for people on discharge from hospital, as well as fund more specialty hospital pharmacy positions in emergency departments and introduce innovative models of patient care, in its response to an inquiry into the state's emergency departments.

The *NSW Government Response - Inquiry into the impact of ambulance ramping and access block on the operation of hospital emergency departments in New South Wales* addressed hospital pharmacists' concerns in two of its recommendations, while SHPA continues to urge investment in the workforce pipeline and capacity of Australia's most populous state to realise full benefit to medicines safety.

SHPA President Tom Simpson says the recommendation that the NSW Government become a signatory to the Commonwealth's Pharmaceutical Reform Agreements (PRA) is a key step to ending its second-class status among Australian states.

'The current risks are well-known; instead of receiving a 30-day Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) supply of medicines when leaving hospital, patients in NSW and the ACT are given 2-7 days' worth and expected to find a GP immediately as part of their recovery.

'As the inquiry pointed out, hospital pharmacists providing more medication to patients on discharge "improves patient wellbeing and reduces the risk of patients re-presenting to Emergency Departments (EDs) if their medication runs out."'

'We commend the NSW Government for seeking to end decades of medicines access inequity by requesting PRA negotiations, and we call on the Federal Government to prioritise discussions to ensure patients in NSW have a safer transition from hospital to home or residential care, and to end the unnecessary waste of GP time when discharged patients urgently seek new scripts within days of leaving hospital.

'We look forward to working with government and our NSW specialty pharmacist members to put in place what has been the standard of care across the country for over a decade.'

Mr Simpson says the patient-centred government response is a boon for patient safety.

'We strongly welcome the NSW Government's support for the report's recommendations, in response to SHPA's member-led advocacy, to provide funding to increase the number of public Hospital Pharmacists in strengthening the state's EDs.

'Medication errors and issues occur more frequently in the busy and time-critical environment of our EDs and these patients require specialty ED Pharmacist care to minimise these errors and uphold safe, quality care.

'More expert practitioners translates into availability that better matches ED opening hours, critically supporting patient flow and freeing up capacity, supporting our doctor and nursing colleagues to spend more time with patients.

'It will also provide NSW hospitals the ability to invest in expanding Partnered Pharmacist Medication Charting (PPMC). The earliest form of pharmacist prescribing in Australia, pioneered in the hospital setting, PPMC is proven to be ten times safer for patients, who spend 10% less time in hospital as a result.'

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional organisation for the 6,100+ Hospital Pharmacists, and their Hospital Pharmacist Intern and Hospital Pharmacy Technician colleagues 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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