

Media release

Thursday 23 December 2021

Hospital Pharmacists welcome Australian Government's shot in the arm for booster program

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed Prime Minister Scott Morrison's announcements yesterday on Australia's COVID-19 vaccine booster program following the emergency meeting of the National Cabinet.

This included additional remuneration for pharmacist immunisers and GPs to administer COVID-19 booster vaccines to Australians, and a call for state and territory-run vaccination clinics to scale up capacity.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says, 'Hospital Pharmacists have been expecting this call-to-arms for state and territory-run vaccination hubs when the national COVID-19 vaccine booster program was announced two months ago, along with the expansion of the COVID-19 vaccine program extending to Australian children.'

'On behalf of the 6,000+ Hospital Pharmacists in Australia, we are delighted to hear the Prime Minister's acknowledgement that when state and territory-run vaccination clinics were operating at their highest capacity, Australia had one of the fastest per-capita vaccination rates in the world.

To date, state and territory-run vaccination clinics have accounted for 40% of the 41.7 million COVID-19 vaccines administered in Australia. Hospital Pharmacists are responsible for the ultra-low temperature storage, distribution and preparation of vaccine doses and, in some hospitals, Hospital Pharmacists were also administering COVID-19 vaccinations during this year's initial roll-out.

Ms Michaels says as some state and territory-run vaccination clinics have scaled down, Hospital Pharmacists have been redeployed back to hospital wards.

'In helping to ramp up the booster program there will be a crucial balance to strike, as Hospital Pharmacists also treat increasing numbers of people hospitalised with COVID-19, and provide pharmacy services to COVID-19-positive patients via innovative community care models.

'Throughout the pandemic, the Hospital Pharmacy community has shown great responsiveness to changing needs, and stands ready to assist with any scaling up of state and territory-run vaccination hubs.

'Australia's now world-leading COVID-19 vaccine program has only been possible through the joint effort of our primary care and hospital sectors, and SHPA welcomes the additional remuneration to GPs and our community pharmacist colleagues to provide Australians with COVID-19 booster vaccines that will ensure we are all as safe as possible in 2022.'

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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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