

Media release

Wednesday 16 March 2022

A call to the profession as Hospital Pharmacists unite to Close the Gap

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is marking 2022's [Closing the Gap Day](#) tomorrow with the publication of an open letter calling for hospital pharmacy leaders to start and support conversations around culturally safe care, while announcing a new training program focused on embedding cultural safety in the workplaces of all Australian Hospital Pharmacists and Technicians.

In the open letter to the profession – [Are you aware of your leadership responsibilities in ensuring a culturally safe workplace?](#) – the Leadership Committees of SHPA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Rural and Remote Health and Leadership and Management streams call for the Closing the Gap message of pledging support for achieving Indigenous health equity by 2030 to be a year-round focus, including through embedding tangible steps in professional development planning.

'How do you, as a leader, ensure that your workplace is a culturally safe environment for those who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, and for those of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds?' ask co-authors Aleena Williams, Susan Trevillian and Russell Hill in the joint open letter, in questions posed to current and emerging hospital pharmacy leaders.

'Amongst those you consider your mentors, is there someone from whom you've gained knowledge and understanding of cultural issues that affect your patients, your team members or your workplace?'

'Whether you're newer to this conversation or continuing your journey, consider making [cultural safety] action items part of this year's CPD plan.'

'[National Closing the Gap Day](#) on 17 March 2022 is a national day of action to pledge support for achieving Indigenous health equality by 2030. Why not mark this day with your team, this year and every year? Attend or host an event, pledge to close the health and life expectancy gap experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, and find out more via [ANTaR](#).'

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the cultural gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians persists due to a lack of cross-cultural communication, education and awareness.

'Education provides the opportunity to increase understanding of Indigenous cultures among non-Indigenous Australians and develop the skills to become culturally competent at both a personal and professional level, which is key to bringing down barriers to safe and equitable patient care and workplaces.'

'We're pleased to announce Indigenous Allied Health Australia's (IAHA) Cultural Responsiveness Training, with 12 months access for all SHPA members to online modules tailored to Australian healthcare workers, supported by Pfizer, will be available in early April.'

'The program has been developed as a starting point to make individuals more culturally aware and workplaces a culturally safe and responsive environment.'

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For more information contact:

Susie Brown, Communications and Media Advisor
sbrown@shpa.org.au | 0437 119 286

About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional, for-purpose organisation for the over 6,300 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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