

# Media release

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## SHPA welcomes boost to potential hospital workforce after Ahpra fast tracks re-registrations

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) today welcomed the announcement of a new pandemic sub-register to fast track the return to the workforce of experienced and qualified health practitioners, as hospitals prepare for the expected surge in demand due to COVID-19.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the establishment of a short-term pandemic response sub-register for the next 12 months by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) and National Boards will facilitate an easier return to the workforce for hundreds of pharmacists keen to support hospital resourcing.

'Ahpra is to be applauded for enabling pharmacists who have held general or specialist registration in the past three years to return to practice without filling in forms or paying fees; this is the kind of prudent, regulatory flexibility Australia needs as Australia's COVID-19 admissions increase.

'SHPA members are embedded at the frontline of this fight, adapting rapidly to new protocols and surging caseloads alongside their multidisciplinary medical teams in every state and territory.

'We invite all pharmacists newly added to Ahpra's pandemic sub-register, particularly those who have experience in hospital pharmacy, to consider joining our [COVID-19 Hospital Pharmacy Relief Register](#), to be listed on SHPA's database of staff willing to work with sites suffering staff shortages in New South Wales, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, ACT and the Northern Territory.

'Practitioners in Queensland and Victoria can also visit the register to connect to direct registration with their respective health departments.'

Ms Michaels says today's announcement complements SHPA's initiatives to bolster the hospital pharmacy workforce at this critical time.

'Since the launch of our COVID-19 Hospital Pharmacy Relief Register, we've seen more than 700 pharmacists, technicians and pharmacy students put their hand up for additional work to ease pressure in their local area.

'Many practitioners, who have had less than six months' experience in the hospital setting, have also undertaken SHPA's Hospital Pharmacy Introductory Training, and we thank them for their enthusiasm.

'We've also opened up SHPA's COVID-19 Member Forum and COVID-19 Webinar Series and continue to see very strong uptake and interest – including from across North America, Asia and Europe.

'It is heartening to see our workforce so ready and willing to band together, and connect with colleagues overseas, to ensure our hospitals are as strongly staffed as possible through the duration of this pandemic.'

– ends –

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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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