

Media release

Wednesday 22 June 2022

Additional hospital beds in QLD Budget 2022/23 welcomed, but more than 150 Hospital Pharmacists needed to ensure safety

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed yesterday's record \$9.78 billion investment over six years into hospitals and healthcare workforce announced by Queensland Treasurer Cameron Dick MP, and calls for investments into the Hospital Pharmacy workforce in Queensland Health to meet and service the additional capacity.

The 2,500 new beds will build on current hospital bed expansion projects, through which just under 900 beds are being introduced throughout Queensland Health.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says at a time of incredible stress and strain, the additional bed capacity is great news for Queenslanders and the Hospital Pharmacists who care for them.

'Ambulance ramping and overcrowding of emergency departments is placing enormous pressure on health system capacity as well as causing stress, burnout and fatigue for Hospital Pharmacists and their colleagues.

'Extra bed capacity must be met with additional Hospital Pharmacist resourcing to ensure they are resourced [according to professional standards](#). Without this expert pharmacist care, medication management services will fall short, placing Queenslanders at risk of medication-related harm.

'Other jurisdictions already use these professional standards as guiding policy to staff Hospital Pharmacy departments; the additional 9,475 healthcare workers the Queensland Government plans to recruit in the next few years must include Hospital Pharmacists if the state is to meet these standards.

'We conservatively estimate more than 150 Hospital Pharmacists are required to safely support the new beds announced.'

Ms Michaels says SHPA members are looking forward to the Queensland Health Pharmacy Workforce Plan, which will be finalised and published in the coming weeks.

'Queensland Health's plan will provide the basis for resourcing public Hospital Pharmacy departments and provide vital medication management services to Queenslanders.

'Queensland Hospital Pharmacy Departments have embraced SHPA's Foundation Residencies for junior Hospital Pharmacists, with 80 Residents having completed the program in Queensland and another 130 currently enrolled.

'This is commendable and essential for Queensland Health's Hospital Pharmacist workforce sustainability, however Hospital Pharmacy Intern positions must also be supported, as these are currently recruited at all-time low numbers of around 35 interns per annum.

'With the additional investment into its health workforce, now is the time for Queensland to reverse course and double, at a minimum, the number of Hospital Pharmacy Interns to ensure Hospital Pharmacist workforce sustainability and viability, for the benefit of all Queenslanders.'

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About SHPA

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