

Media release

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Hospital pharmacists in new national taskforce to support clinicians providing COVID-19 care

A large coalition of peak Australian health professional groups, including the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA), has come together to develop new 'living guidelines' that will provide world-first, continually updated evidence-based guidance to clinicians caring for people with COVID-19.

Under the National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce – convened by the Australian Living Evidence Consortium based at Cochrane Australia in the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine at Monash University – teams of researchers, experts and clinicians will continue working around the clock to deliver national guidelines for the clinical care of people with COVID-19 across primary, acute and critical care settings.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the guidelines will distil the latest evidence from around the world to inform healthcare teams caring for Australians with COVID-19.

'This marks a key moment in Australia's coordinated, national effort to better understand coronavirus and manage the potentially fatal symptoms of COVID-19.

'As the only pharmacy organisation member, SHPA's representatives to the taskforce will provide medicines expertise to support the rapid review of national and international clinical evidence, and ensure our clinicians at the front line have access to reliable, up-to-the minute recommendations during this unprecedented health crisis.'

Using ground-breaking evidence surveillance and automation technologies, the Taskforce will identify and summarise global COVID-19 research findings and feed this evidence to guideline panels every week, drawn from across Australia's clinical and consumer communities. The results will then be delivered into the hands of clinicians at point of care; trusted 'single source' of advice to help inform clinical decisions.

The National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce is comprised of Australia's peak health professional bodies whose members are caring for people with COVID-19, in close partnership with Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments.

Ms Michaels says the guidelines exemplify the power of collaboration and the commitment Australian health organisations to work together to help clinicians who are at the front line of clinical care.

'The Taskforce will be working weekly with its members, collaborators, medical associations and other stakeholders to ensure the uptake and utility of the guidelines by Australian healthcare professionals.

'Our shared mission is to ensure that Australians receive the best possible care during the COVID-19 outbreak. Nothing is more important at this critical time.'

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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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