

Media release

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Hospital expertise can realise full potential of expanding pharmacist scope

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed the release of the [Strengthening Medicare Taskforce Report](#), while urging the Australian Government to expand the Medicare Benefits Scheme (MBS) to broaden the positive impact of medicines review services as part of collaborative pharmacist care from hospital to the home.

The implementation of recommendations in the report, which was released on Friday, will be supported by \$750m in primary care funding allocated at the last Federal Budget.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the investment is a unique opportunity to leverage hospital expertise in expanding pharmacists' scope of practice and impact to all settings of care, including primary care settings.

'Hospital pharmacists have been collaborating in multidisciplinary team-based care models for decades, pushing the boundaries of practice to support safe, effective and efficient pharmacist care.

'Partnered Pharmacist Medication Charting was first piloted in Australian hospitals in 2015, and is now a feature in most states and territories, as hospital pharmacists continue to demonstrate the benefits of team-based, collaborative pharmacist prescribing and medicine charting with medical colleagues.

'Hospital pharmacists are also taking the lead in prescribing decisions, monitoring and adjusting dosages and medicines according to patient outcomes, which takes further pressure off our medical and nursing workforces.

'These innovations need to shape the future of pharmacy, in all settings, in two ways; firstly, by informing emerging pharmacist roles that will propagate team-based, patient-centred care across the country, such as GP Pharmacists and onsite Aged Care Pharmacists.

'Secondly, hospital-led expertise, experience and education can equip more pharmacists to address increasing medicines complexity. Australians entering and leaving hospital are regularly taking an average of nine medicines, so pharmacists must assist with medicines management and deprescribing in collaborative agreement with GPs.'

Ms Michaels says realising the full potential of expanded pharmacist scope is key to reforming and transforming Australia's healthcare systems for greater sustainability and improved patient outcomes.

'The immediate and current pressure on our models of care is felt in every part of the system. Too many Australians continue to end up in hospital, when better integration and access to healthcare services could enable more care in the community.

'We are glad to see the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce Report enshrining healthcare professionals working in a co-ordinated, person-centred manner to their full scope of practice as part of its vision.

'In our [pre-Budget submission](#), SHPA advocated for pharmacists to be further embedded into general practices and for the addition of clinical pharmacy services onto the Medicare Benefits Schedule to support collaborative medication management services for patients in primary care.

'These evidence-backed reforms will reduce demand on GPs and ensure recently discharged patients who are at risk of re-admission can access post-discharge care in a timely manner, closer to home.'

The Strengthening Medicare Taskforce Report also recommended local health system integration and person-centred care should be supported through through Primary Health Networks (PHNs) working with Local Hospital Networks, local practices, ACCHOs and pharmacies.

'We look forward to transformation and funding that will meaningfully connect the disparate parts of our healthcare system together to ensure patients no longer face extended GP wait times, or fall through the cracks entirely.

'Many hospitals have initiated their own post-discharge pharmacist outreach services due to the gaps in Australian primary care, and even then, communication to primary care pharmacists and GPs regarding these care episodes is lacking due to the differences in systems used by Australian clinicians and consumers.

'On this front, we also look forward to the modernising and updating of My Health Record to become a real-time, fully-integrated digital health system, as flagged by Minister Butler earlier today.

'Australians rightly expect a health system that places them at the centre and SHPA is ready to help make it happen.'

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional organisation for the 6,100+ 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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