

# Media release

Wednesday 11 March 2020

## \$2.4bn package welcomed as SHPA urges calm on COVID-19

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed today's [\\$2.4 billion Federal Government package](#), including \$500 million for hospitals, designed to help protect Australians against coronavirus (COVID-19), while cautioning that 'panic buying' of medicines could contribute to shortages for inpatients who need them most.

Today's response includes an already-announced national agreement with states and territories to split additional costs related to responding to the virus, while a \$30 million public health campaign will aim to teach Australians more about limiting the spread of COVID-19 through hygiene measures, what to do if symptoms develop and where to seek help.

Speaking following the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)'s Medicines Shortages Working Group meeting yesterday, SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says all health professionals should carefully consider patient need and circumstances relative to supply chains and follow the expert, [centralised advice of the TGA](#) as the impact of COVID-19 changes daily.

'We welcome the establishment of up to 100 "fever clinics" and a new Medicare item to support the delivery of health advice remotely, which will enable hospital pharmacists and their colleagues to better support our most acutely unwell and vulnerable patients.

'We encourage practitioners to follow local COVID-19 advice where available, including in the [ACT](#), [New South Wales](#), [Queensland](#), [South Australia](#), [Victoria](#), and [Western Australia](#), while general advice is also available in [Tasmania](#) and the [Northern Territory](#).'

Ms Michaels says it is important to raise awareness of risks associated with stockpiling medicines, which has risen in line with uncertainty in the community.

'Medicines are not a typical product, they are very different to tinned tomatoes and toilet paper.

'As reiterated by our partners at [NPS MedicineWise](#) this week, having much more than a month's supply of medicines comes with extra costs and medicine safety risks.

'Medicines needs may change, dosages may need to be reviewed and altered, and medicines themselves can expire or be easily misused if not closely handled.

'We urge all Australians to manage their medicines as normal, and to follow the Australian Department of Health's [COVID-19 medical advice and official reports](#) webpage to ensure they remain informed.'

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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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