

Media release

Thursday 18 November 2021

‘We can’t lose this silver lining’: SHPA welcomes ongoing focus on antimicrobial resistance

Hospital Pharmacists are integral to curbing the spread of antibiotic resistance as attention turns to [World Antimicrobial Awareness Week](#) and the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) welcomes renewed Australian Government commitment to protect the community from antimicrobial-resistant disease.

Today SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels welcomed Health Minister Greg Hunt’s announcement of a further \$14.2m over the next three years to closely monitor antimicrobial resistance in human health in Australia.

‘On behalf of our members and their medical and nursing peers, who see first-hand the devastating effects of antimicrobial resistance in our hospitals and in the community, we welcome this critical investment.

‘Hospital Pharmacists are at the vanguard of this effort by leading Antimicrobial Stewardship programs in larger health services, and implementing innovative, technology-driven solutions to ensure Australians in rural and regional centres are afforded the same protection and care.’

Ms Michaels says improvements in antimicrobials prescribing practice due to COVID-19 belie stagnancy in other key measurements.

‘Appropriateness of antimicrobial prescribing has remained static since 2015, as reported in the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care’s [AURA 2021 report](#), and compliance with key national and local guidelines decreased 5% to 65.3% between 2015 and 2019.

‘During the pandemic, however, we’ve seen a large decrease in the amount of antimicrobials dispensed in Australia – we can’t lose this “silver lining” and, through their innovative practice embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams, specialised Hospital Pharmacists can lead the way.’

Minyon Avent, SHPA Infectious Diseases Leadership Committee member says this year’s theme resonates with the role of every pharmacist to spread awareness to preserve the efficacy and usefulness of antimicrobials.

‘The message is simple, handle antimicrobials with care, and that has never been more important as we enter a new phase of living with COVID-19.

‘This is also not an issue restricted to hospitals – the 2021 theme “Spread Awareness, Stop Resistance” reminds us that antimicrobial resistance also threatens animal health, agriculture, food safety and the environment, and we all have a part to play.’

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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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