

Media release

Wednesday 6 October 2021

SHPA welcomes healthcare focus in ACT Budget

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed \$500 million in healthcare investment and focus on expanding health care system capacity through the next pandemic period and beyond, as part of the recovery-focused ACT Budget released this afternoon.

Announcing the [2021-22 ACT Budget](#) virtually, Andrew Barr MLA, Chief Minister and Treasurer said the investment responds to growing demand for core services and the increased complexity of health service delivery, while ensuring essential COVID-19 health initiatives are sustained.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says commensurate funding for hospital pharmacy and hospital pharmacists is required to ensure excellent patient services keep up with expanded buildings, beds and infrastructure.

'On behalf of our members and their colleagues, SHPA welcomes the planned expansion of Canberra Hospital's Intensive Care Unit and Emergency Department to meet the capacity and needs of Canberrans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

'Growing hospital services must mean more hospital pharmacists, if we are to ensure medicines use and medicines supply is undertaken safely for acutely unwell Canberrans. Today, hospital pharmacists are key to the access to and supply of critical medicines from the National Medical Stockpile, remdesivir and sotrovimab, to treat hospitalised COVID-19 patients.

'In the same vein, SHPA supports today's commitment to health workforce and clinical training strategies, including building strong partnerships with key academic institutions and training providers, which aligns with our [budget submission](#) calling for more workforce funding.

'SHPA provides Foundation Residencies to train the next generation of hospital pharmacists in the ACT and we look forward to stronger partnerships with government to ensure the workforce pipeline is sufficient to limit vacancies, such as those experienced recently, and safeguard the year-round delivery of patient care.'

Ms Michaels says the future-focus on managing COVID-19 is especially important as ACT looks toward contingencies once the current lockdown ends.

'Nearly 50% of all vaccine doses in the ACT have been delivered through territory-run clinics, in which hospital pharmacists and technicians are crucial to operations, one of the highest proportions in Australia.

'Their expertise will remain crucial as essential COVID-19 health initiatives continue, with the ongoing vaccination program complemented by the Health Emergency Control Centre, quarantine and compliance activities, and hospital and testing services.

'We will see this across the country: the unique expertise of the hospital pharmacy profession will play an indispensable role as Australia meets the challenge of living with COVID-19.'

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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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