

Media release

Friday 10 September 2021

New hospital beds in WA welcome, investment in hospital pharmacists must follow

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed commitments to additional hospital beds in the WA State Budget, while cautioning their benefit to the care of Western Australians can only be realised through commensurate funding for hospital pharmacist positions.

Delivered by Premier Mark McGowan yesterday, the WA State Budget features \$1.9 billion in funding for health and hospital services, including 332 additional beds, as well as \$71.6 million for employing more doctors, nurses and midwives across the health system.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the investment presents a great opportunity, as members in WA report current gaps in service delivery that risk preventable harm to patients.

'The provisions for hospital care in the WA State Budget are welcomed by our members, but we can't invest in planes without investing in pilots.

'The package must include funding for hospital pharmacists to provide clinical pharmacy services to every one of the these additional beds.

'SHPA members working at the coalface in WA report concerning gaps in clinical pharmacy services, and we look forward to supporting measures to close these gaps, ensuring the safe and effective use of medicines across the state.'

Ms Michaels says the value of hospital pharmacists far exceeds the care they provide during inpatient stays.

'Hospital pharmacists are essential to ensuring patients leave hospital equipped and empowered to manage their new medicines regimen safely at home, while identifying deprescribing opportunities and improving the safety and quality use of medicines for hospitalised patients.

'Beyond the hospital walls, hospital pharmacists are key to implementing broader risk mitigation measures that impact transitions of care, including real time prescription monitoring and hospital outreach services for older Australians to prevent admission to hospital.

'As well as fostering health and wellbeing, funding for hospital pharmacy is a crucial pillar of healthcare sustainability, with research placing their value ratio as \$23 in healthcare efficiencies for every dollar invested.'

Ms Michaels also welcomed \$487 million for COVID-19 preparedness and response measures, with hospital pharmacy stepping up as central to vaccine delivery through state-run clinics.

'High rates of vaccination are crucial to a safe and progressive reopening to other states and overseas, as we start our return to pre-pandemic life.

'This cannot be done without continuing to harness the unique expertise of hospital pharmacists, technicians and their peers, who are at the frontline ensuring vaccines are accessible to as many West Australians as possible in state-run clinics, day after day and week after week.

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For more information contact:

Susie Brown, Communications and Media Advisor
sbrown@shpa.org.au | 0437 119 286

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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