

Media release

Wednesday 08 May 2024

Budget 2024/25: Victorian pharmacy workforce needs priority support

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed the Victorian Budget's multi-year investment of \$11 billion into its state's health system and an additional \$1.7 billion to improve hospitals and health infrastructure but says it stops short of providing a much-needed boost to the ailing pharmacy workforce.

Announced yesterday by Victorian Treasurer, The Hon. Tim Pallas MP, [Budget 2024-25](#) includes \$8.8 billion to fund, upgrade and expand Victorian hospitals over the long term in areas of current and anticipated growth.

On behalf of Victorian members and their colleagues, SHPA President Tom Simpson welcomed the additional \$28 million invested into the Victorian healthcare workforce, but noted the pharmacy profession is unjustifiably overlooked as a priority group.

'It is always heartening to see a significant investment into our hospitals, health systems and health workforce, but whole care teams need to be fully staffed, including crucial hospital pharmacy positions.

'Budget 24-25 has ambitious plans to expand and upgrade existing facilities with new operating suites, pre and post-op beds and new emergency departments, however the pharmacy workforce required to service and support these facilities is also necessary.

'Pharmacists are excluded from the Priority List in the recently updated [Victorian Health Workforce Strategy](#), yet are listed as a priority group across all states according to the [National Skills Commission](#).

'This conflict is indeed frustrating and should be urgently addressed so that more investment can be put towards developing the vital pharmacy workforce.

'We already hear from our Victorian members that they are struggling with workforce shortages, yet due to funding shortfalls are unable to offer Residency Training Positions to meet the demand, which hampers the state's ability to develop a sustainable workforce pipeline.

'Hospital pharmacists and pharmacy technicians play a crucial role in ensuring the safe and quality use of medicines in Victorian hospitals and provide clinical pharmacy services to Victorians when they are most unwell.

'Medicines are our most common healthcare intervention, and many confer high risk in the hospital setting and on discharge, requiring specialty pharmacist expertise to ensure their safe and timely use.

'Pharmacists in Victoria are nation-leading in collaborative Partnered Pharmacist Medication Charting which now has a footprint based in most Australian jurisdictions, leveraging off the success of Victoria. However, it is unfortunate that we hear sometimes these models which have [been evaluated to improve safety and quality and reduce the cost of each admission by \\$726](#), are being wound back due to workforce shortages.

Budget 2024-25 papers reveal \$442 million has been allocated to Health Workforce Training and Development to provide career pathways and contribute towards a stable, ongoing accredited workforce in the health sector in Victoria.

Mr Simpson says, 'These funds must be unlocked to support hospital pharmacist and pharmacy technician positions, training and development, including funding placements in additional pharmacist Residency Training Programs and pharmacist Registrar Training Programs.'

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For more information contact:

Caroline Barlow, Media and Stakeholder Relations
cbarlow@shpa.org.au | 0436 009 138

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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