

# Media release

Saturday 30 April 2022

## Hospital Pharmacists welcome PBS co-payment reduction pledge, urge bipartisan backing to improve access to medicines

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists Australia (SHPA) has today welcomed the joint announcement from Prime Minister, the Hon. Scott Morrison MP and Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon. Greg Hunt MP to reduce the general patient Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) co-payment from \$42.50 to \$32.50 from 1 January 2023 and calls for bipartisan support on this announcement to ensure the best access to medicines is guaranteed for all Australians after the Federal election.

Hospital Pharmacists are responsible for 24% of all PBS expenditure and supply just under five million PBS prescriptions annually to patients, and these significant figures continue to grow year on year.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says Hospital Pharmacists are acutely aware of how co-payments and out-of-pocket costs are a barrier to patients receiving timely and quality access to medicines.

'Hospital Pharmacists provide care to the most unwell and complex patients in our healthcare system, with patients often being discharged from respiratory and transplant medicine wards with upwards of twenty different medicines being prescribed and subsequently dispensed by Hospital Pharmacists.

'With recent figures confirming the largest rise in inflation in over two decades, today's announcement will work hand-in-glove with the Budget 2022-23 announcement to reduce the PBS Safety Net threshold and support cost-of-living measures, particularly for the most vulnerable Australians requiring multiple medicines for complex and chronic conditions.

Ms Michaels says Hospital Pharmacists are currently managing large patient loads in hospital wards and emergency departments, a phenomenon experienced across the country amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

'It is well-documented that lack of medicines affordability and adherence can result in some patients attending an emergency department when their health deteriorates, or when they require urgent access to medicines.

'Any measures that improve affordability, such as reductions in the PBS general co-payment, will have downstream impacts to reduce burden on emergency departments and keep Australians out of hospitals.

'Hospital Pharmacists call for further action to address medicines access and affordability for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who currently face higher PBS co-payments in hospital settings. This is central to SHPA's [Federal Election 2022 policy priorities](#), and we look forward to working with all parliamentarians on this issue after the election.'

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### For more information contact:

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### 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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