

Media release

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Strong signs amid visions for community pharmacy

The critical importance of safely managing medicines for patients moving between the hospital and the home was a welcome highlight as the Health and Shadow Health ministers presented visions for the future of community pharmacy on the Gold Coast yesterday.

Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the election-year presentations by [Health Minister Greg Hunt](#) and [Shadow Health Minister Catherine King](#) at the Australian Pharmacy Professional (APP) conference cite many positive policies to improve safe, timely and equitable access to medicines for Australians.

Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says SHPA members have welcomed \$10.5b investment into new and amended listings on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) in recent years.

'An increasing majority of new PBS listings are for complex diseases such as leukaemia, malignant melanoma and cystic fibrosis, medicines that are typically prescribed and dispensed for acutely unwell patients in the hospital setting by hospital pharmacists.

'Minister Hunt also noted 84 per cent penetration of My Health Record into community pharmacies – this is a crucial step toward improving transitions of care, ideally linked to support for hospital pharmacists to upload information on discharge and supply of discharge medicines, ensuring GPs and other community care providers are empowered to provide informed, quality care.'

'It was also positive to note \$600m for the new Dose Administration Aid (DAA) program. Provision of DAAs is another key issue impacting transitions of care and lack support to provide DAAs in hospital increases risk of readmission.'

Ms Michaels says SHPA welcomes Ms King's focus on harmonisation of state laws and programs on the supply of medicines.

'As the national professional organisation advocating for all hospital pharmacists, SHPA intimately understands the challenges of a fragmented Australian healthcare system.

'On behalf of our members who strive to provide optimal, equitable patient care in all settings, we welcome approaches to overcome differences at Commonwealth and State level and enact real reform that streamlines the provision of medicines in our hospitals, which we anticipate will be addressed by the proposed Australian Health Reform Commission.'

Ms Michaels says while both MPs reaffirmed commitment to the 7th Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA), [future arrangements should be cognizant of all areas of pharmacy practice](#).

'The CPA explicitly supports access to PBS medicines, and pharmacy programs that support the quality use of PBS-listed medicines.

'In caring for Australia's most acutely unwell, hospital pharmacists oversee more than 20% of annual PBS expenditure and therefore have a key role to play in the system's sustainability.

‘SHPA would also like to see commitment from the major parties on improving access to medicines for Indigenous Australians by supporting co-payment relief in hospitals.’

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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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