

Media release

Tuesday 27 October 2020

Strong steps for patient safety as SHPA welcomes new Aged Care recommendations

Clear patient safety measures aligned with recommendations made by the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) have emerged from the later stages of the [Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety](#), and were welcomed by the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia today.

The inclusion of pharmacists in residential aged care teams and improving the transition between residential aged care and hospital care feature in the [Counsel Assisting's Proposed Recommendations at Final Hearing](#), reflecting the importance of facilitating hospital pharmacist expertise at crucial points in the care journey for older Australians.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the supported presence of a pharmacist in the residential aged care setting is integral to safe, quality care.

'The crucial role of pharmacy in aged care is undeniable, with [Australian research indicating](#) 91% of aged care residents take at least five regular medicines, and 65% take more than 10, every day.

'The recommendation (18) to engage a pharmacist as part of minimum allied health care, supported by capped base payments per resident and activity-based payments for the direct care provided, is a strong step toward reduce medicines misuse and medication-related hospitalisations and injuries among this vulnerable cohort.

'Importantly, and as advocated by SHPA, the presence of a dedicated Geriatric Medicine Pharmacist will ensure the optimal efficacy of Residential Medication Management Reviews (RMMRs) for aged care residents, and we welcome the recommendation (70) to allow and fund pharmacists from 1 January 2022 to conduct reviews on entry to residential care, and annually thereafter.'

Ms Michaels also welcomed the recommendations' focus on transitions of care, a high-risk setting for older Australians.

'Care teams are flying blind if medication histories and medication reconciliations are not conducted and clearly communicated after care transitions, such as upon admission or discharge to hospital, or arriving to residential aged care.

'SHPA welcomes the recommendation (72) that discharge to residential aged care from hospital should only occur once appropriate clinical handover and discharge summary has been provided to, and acknowledged by the residential care service, and provided to the person being discharged.'

Ms Michaels says SHPA members look forward to the final recommendations and resourcing announcements in 2021.

'Hospital pharmacists are passionate about evidence-based care. SHPA will continue to advocate for investment in clinical pharmacy services for aged care residents – including 1:200 pharmacist to resident ratios – so pharmacists can identify and manage medication-related issues and reduce harm.

'When present in the right place at the right time, pharmacists can identify deprescribing opportunities and foster high quality clinical handover as patients move between care settings, which is vital for their wellbeing and quality of life.'

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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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