

# Media release

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## 2019 Budget: SHPA welcomes positive steps in medicine investment and aged care

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed focus on embedded pharmacy positions in aged care, investment in equal access to new medicines and improvements to hospital infrastructure and services after the release of the 2019-20 Federal Budget tonight.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the adding of new cancer medicines to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and investment in clinical pharmacists in aged care are welcome aspects of the Budget, which was delivered by Federal Treasurer Josh Frydenberg in Canberra.

'As outlined in SHPA's [2018-19 Federal Budget submission](#), preliminary Australian evidence indicates a return on investment of \$1.54 for every \$1 spent embedding clinical pharmacists in aged care and we welcome the Federal Government's allocation of \$7.7 million in funding to help ensure greater access to their expertise regarding the use of medication, in particular inappropriate use of psychotropics and antibiotics.

'As part of the \$331 million over five years from 2018-19 for new and amended listings on the PBS, our members and their broader healthcare teams will enthusiastically welcome the addition of medicines to treat breast, blood and skin cancers and SHPA welcomes additional investment into the PBS-adjacent Life Saving Drugs Program, which is wholly managed by hospital pharmacists.'

'Hospital pharmacists now facilitate more than 20 per cent of PBS expenditure and play a crucial role managing the introduction of cutting-edge medicines and the overall sustainability of this essential mechanism that improves equity of medicines access for all Australians.

Ms Michaels says it is surprising, given the increasing importance of medicines to the health of Australians, to see signs of proposed changes to hospital pharmacy pricing arrangements.

'We are concerned at the short timeline of 1 July 2019 for potential implementation of any new pricing approach.

'The proven efficiency and efficacy of hospital pharmacy stewardship of Australia's growing medicines budget reaffirms the need for transparent negotiations and broad consultation with the whole pharmacy profession, given the potential impact of any such changes.'

There are 250,000 medicine-related hospital admissions each year in Australia, at a cost of \$1.4 billion to the health system.

Ms Michaels welcomed the announcement of \$107.8 million over seven years from 2018-19 to be invested into health infrastructure and services and \$70.8 million for additional infrastructure and services to support the diagnosis, treatment and therapy for cancer patients.

'The medicines management expertise of hospital pharmacists is pivotal in the effort to keep people out of hospital and SHPA also welcomes \$1.3 billion over seven years for the Community Health and Hospitals Program, aiming to support patient care while reducing pressure on community and hospital services.'

SHPA also welcomed \$80 million to establish a Centre of Excellence in Cellular Immunotherapy in Victoria and \$200 million in 2019-20 to continue the My Health Record system.

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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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