

Media release

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SHPA welcomes steps toward lifting NSW hospital pharmacy

The Society of Hospitals Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed signs of progress in yesterday's [New South Wales State Budget](#) toward much-needed investment in the number of hospital pharmacists to improve the safety and quality of medicines use in the state.

The NSW State Budget 2019-20 includes a \$2.8 billion funding package to recruit a total of 8,300 frontline health staff, over four years, with 45 per cent located in regional New South Wales.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says investment in more hospital pharmacist was the organisation's [number one priority ahead of the 2019 NSW State Election](#).

'It is positive to see 880 new allied health positions budgeted, which should include many pharmacists alongside social workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and psychologists.

'This commitment is a welcome step toward addressing NSW's hospital pharmacist to hospital bed ratio, which is currently the lowest in the country.'

Ms Michaels says there are an average of 75 medication-related incidents in NSW each day and two serious incidents each week resulting in patient harm.

'International evidence shows regular pharmacist input in a hospital setting results in a reduced length of stay and increased patient satisfaction, and Australian evidence has shown a \$23 return for every \$1 spent on clinical pharmacy services in public hospitals.

'As a non-signatory to the Pharmaceutical Reform Agreement, which facilitates the provision of PBS medicines to patients leaving hospital to reduce spending in primary care and improve access to medicines, there's still more to do in NSW to ensure patients have access to the 30 days of medicines supply they need upon leaving hospital.

'More broadly, it is crucial PBS funding to hospitals that supports clinical pharmacy services, which ensure appropriate pharmacy counselling, is provided for high-risk PBS medicines such as opioids. Without participation in the Pharmaceutical Reform Agreement, NSW is still a long way behind other states in supporting optimal medicines management in hospitals.'

On behalf of the SHPA NSW Branch and members, Ms Michaels welcomed new investment to leverage electronic medical records and digital health solutions to improve patient safety.

'Sixty per cent of adverse drug events are related to the incomplete or incorrect transfer of medication information during transitions of care to, within and from acute care settings.

'Echoing the third recommendation of [SHPA's pre-election submission](#), the NSW state budget 2019-20 includes \$92.4 million in streamlined patient care through digital technology projects, including linking NSW Ambulance and hospital medical records to support faster and safer transfer of care from NSW Ambulance to

hospital emergency departments, and more mobile digital healthcare and video conferencing for clinicians and patients.

'We also welcome the \$45 million over four years for palliative care, which includes digital health solutions and the refurbishment of existing facilities in addition to 100 palliative care nurses, and more Aboriginal health workers.'

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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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