

# Media release

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## Budget 2023: SHPA welcomes patient-centred support for specialty pharmacist expertise to reduce hospital pressures

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed the many patient-focused healthcare measures in the Federal Budget, further improving medicines affordability for patients while supporting collaborative team-based care to improve medicines safety.

Handed down by Treasurer Jim Chalmers MP tonight, Federal Budget 2023-24 also includes a strong initial \$5.7 billion response to the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce Report which will take pressures off public hospitals and emergency departments.

SHPA President Tom Simpson welcomed the funding focus on critical transitions in and out of hospital, aimed at reducing hospital re-admissions through team-based care involving expert pharmacists in specialty roles, long championed by SHPA.

'Key pharmacy programs – to support vaccination, opioid dependence treatment, medication review services for patients and the Regional Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance – will benefit from \$1.3 billion in investment.

'We welcome measures to reduce pressure on public hospitals and emergency departments in response to the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce Report, such as tripling of bulk billing incentives and establishing Medicare Urgent Care Clinics.

'Despite Australia being on the other side of the pandemic, workforce and hospital capacity issues have only gotten worse; the \$445.1 million to increase funding for the Workforce Incentive Program–Practice Stream will further enable team-based care in primary care settings that include general practice pharmacists.

'Hospital pharmacists and technicians have rapidly expanded their scope of practice over the last decade and we look forward to contributing to the Scope of Practice Review to elevate the positive impact of all healthcare disciplines.'

Mr Simpson says transitions of care and reducing hospital re-admission is the 'bread and butter' of hospital pharmacists.

'The \$98.9 million to connect Australians at greater risk of hospitalisation to a general practice must include the pharmacy sector in both acute and primary settings, given we know there are 250,000 medication-related hospital admissions, currently costing the healthcare system \$1.4 billion each year.'

Budget 2023-24 includes \$13.2 million to support efforts to end HIV transmission by 2030, enabling HIV antiviral treatment access for Medicare-ineligible patients. Public hospital pharmacy departments will ensure pharmacy care and medicines supply for this vulnerable cohort.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels also welcomed the Budget's \$315 million to support culturally appropriate and safe aged care services, as well as build the capacity of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services to better support cancer care needs.

'SHPA is proud to support the "Yes" vote in the upcoming referendum to enshrine an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice in the Constitution.

'Improving care for First Nations peoples in aged care and cancer services will assist Australia's efforts to Close The Gap. Medicines are one of the most common interventions in cancer care and geriatric medicine, and SHPA reiterates our call for the Closing The Gap PBS Co-payment Measure to be expanded to include public hospitals.

'Earlier this year the Australian Senate agreed, in principle, to address this glaring oversight in the current program following advocacy from SHPA and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO).

'As Australia's peak body championing specialty pharmacy practice, SHPA is committed to ensuring the advanced expertise of leading practitioners is harnessed to improve the lives of all Australians, safely and fairly.'

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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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