

Media release

Tuesday 18 April 2023

Hospital pharmacists congratulate Prof John Skerritt on retirement; welcome win on hospital compounding regulation changes

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) today congratulates Professor John Skerritt on his retirement from his position as Deputy Secretary of the Health Products Regulation Group, having led the Therapeutic Goods Administration for over a decade, while welcoming TGA support for important changes to hospital compounding regulation.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says, 'Our hospital pharmacist members thank Professor Skerritt for his service to Australia's internationally recognised medicines regulatory system, which has upheld and supported safe and quality access to medicines for Australians.

'The COVID-19 pandemic in recent years has been a challenging and testing time for Australians, and we have been fortunate to have John at the helm of the TGA to steward Australians through access to new vaccines and treatments for COVID-19.

'In early 2023, SHPA and its Compounding Services Leadership Committee, chaired by Branko Radojkovic FSHP, successfully worked with the TGA to amend the [Therapeutic Goods Regulations 1990](#) to allow specialist hospital pharmacists to compound time-critical and life-saving medicines in anticipation of need, to ensure hospital patients would not endure any unnecessary delays to critical treatment.

'We are proud to have recently secured this regulatory change on behalf of our members and the patients they care for, and the entire process has demonstrated that John and his team at the TGA have prioritised Australians' access to medicines with effective and robust regulation at their core, which is why the TGA is renowned internationally.'

Ms Michaels praised Mr Skerritt's stewardship of the TGA, a vital guardian of medicines safety and quality.

'John's leadership has entrenched TGA as an open, consultative partner on key medication safety initiatives, such as work with SHPA in recent years to improve reporting of medicines shortages in Australia with legislative reform that came into effect in January 2019.

'John ensured the TGA was a central player in opioid medicines regulation and access reform, leading to the development of opioid stewardship clinical care standards, which are key to reducing the impact of opioid-related harm in hospitals, at transitions of care and in the community. He also facilitated additional access and approval pathways for overseas sponsors of medicines to bring their products into Australia, to the direct benefit of clinicians and consumers in need.

'John leaves a strong legacy as the TGA is one of the most renowned regulators in the international arena.

'We thank John for trusting the voice of SHPA and hospital pharmacy, and our advice on crucial issues related to the use of medicines in Australia and wish him the very best in his retirement.'

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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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