

# Media release

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## **SHPA welcomes national medicines access equity recommendations in NHRA Mid-term Review Final Report**

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has today welcomed the release of [National Health Reform Agreement \(NHRA\) Mid-term Review Final Report](#), containing forty-five recommendations to build a more connected, sustainable and equitable health system, including recommendations about medicines access equity and funding.

SHPA President Tom Simpson says, 'We are pleased to see that the Mid-term Review of the NHRA has formally recommended that a future Agreement should deliver nationally consistent access to medicines across the care continuum, extending medicines access arrangements under Pharmaceutical Reform Agreements (PRA) to New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.'

'Patients in every other state receive a month's worth of PBS medicines on discharge from hospital – however, due to the longstanding lack of PRAs, patients in NSW and ACT are only provided three to seven days' supply and are forced to scramble to get a GP appointment to continue accessing medicines that can keep them out of hospital.'

'For over a decade, SHPA has advocated for a national, equitable approach to pharmaceuticals in public hospitals. Patients on one side of a state border should have the same access to the PBS as patients on the other side of the border. SHPA has always championed patient equity, and on this issue our voice has been loud and consistent, through multiple Federal and State Budget submissions, Election Priority Statements, and it is always high on the agenda when we meet with both levels of government.'

'We have seen public progress made in recent years to address the lack of PRAs and inequitable medicines access in NSW and ACT public hospitals, which risks a safe transition of care, with the [ACT's Health Services Plan 2022-2030](#) and the [NSW Government's Response to the Inquiry into Public Hospital Access Block and Ambulance Ramping](#) supporting its establishment.'

'This Mid-term Review of the NHRA now provides the Federal Government yet another reason to implement nationally consistent medicines access in our hospitals system – as we called for in our [2022 Federal Election Priorities Statement](#) – and we look forward to being intimately involved in this process ahead of the next NHRA scheduled to begin early July 2025.'

The Mid-term Review of the NHRA Final Report also made recommendations for access to high-cost, highly-specialised therapies and consistency in delivery across Australia.

Mr Simpson says, 'SHPA is grateful that the complexity of medicines funding and access and the "postcode lottery" nature of medicines access that we described in our consultation interview – particularly for high-cost therapies – has been heard and understood by the Mid-Term Reviewers.'

'We support structured processes to scan the medicines horizons that are inclusive of all stakeholders. Our members have much to contribute to this as they are the pharmacists who provide novel medicines to Australians as part of clinical trials, compassionate access and medicines access programs.

'The recommendation for a unified national Health Technology Assessment (HTA) process is welcomed, with the aim of addressing national consistency, risk sharing, access, affordability, timeliness and information sharing across our federated healthcare system.

'SHPA members in Paediatrics and Neonatology, Haematology and Oncology Specialty Practice Groups have already raised significant access inequity issues for high-cost, specialised therapies that require significant infrastructure investment, with their patients having to travel interstate for cutting edge treatments such as CAR T-cell therapy and other cancer treatments.

'SHPA looks forward to providing our members' expertise in novel and specialised medicines to HTA processes and the next phase of the HTA Review.'

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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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