

Media release

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Country Western Australia set to benefit from new generation of Hospital Pharmacists

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed the expansion of funded Hospital Pharmacy Intern and Foundation Resident positions in rural and regional Western Australia as a shot in the arm for workforce sustainability and medicines safety in the vast state.

Supported by the WA Country Health Service (WACHS), nine supported Hospital Pharmacy Interns will begin in 2023, while another nine Hospital Pharmacists will be supported to undertake SHPA Foundation Residencies, with the investment recurring annually, enabling communities to benefit from increased local specialised medicines expertise.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says WACHS has set the national benchmark for an ambitious rural Hospital Pharmacy workforce investment that will support a future pipeline of expert pharmacists.

‘On behalf of our members in WA we congratulate WA Minister for Health and Mental Health, the Hon. Amber-Jade Sanderson MP, WA Health, and WACHS Chief Pharmacist, Adam Hort, on expanding a single pharmacy intern placement to nine annualised Hospital Pharmacy Interns and nine Foundation Residents.

‘Surveys from the National Australian Pharmacy Students’ Association (NAPSA) tell us that over 80% of pharmacy students want to work in Hospital Pharmacy, and this expanded training program will provide these opportunities.

‘We know the best way to attract young clinicians to regional and remote areas is formalised local training programs with commensurate supports such as accommodation subsidies and travel allowances.

‘The WACHS Pharmacy Workforce Plan ambitiously achieves this and helps WA Health to achieve several workforce recommendations in the [Sustainable Health Review – Final Report](#).’

Ms Michaels says the workforce investment will help ensure country Western Australians are able to benefit from Hospital Pharmacist services at the bedside whenever they are receiving care.

‘WACHS has already been at the forefront of pharmacy innovation and investment with their award-winning TeleChemotherapy Pharmacy team which transformed cancer care delivery for country Western Australians.

‘The nine Hospital Pharmacy Interns will be perfectly placed to step into Foundation Residencies, two years of hands-on hospital-based training that will further develop and consolidate their skills in dispensary services, medicines management and clinical pharmacy.

‘These additional clinical pharmacy resources will also enable WACHS to further expand collaborative pharmacist prescribing initiatives such as Partnered Pharmacist Medication Charting (PPMC) for

inpatients which have been a major success throughout WA hospitals to improve safety, capacity and efficiency over the past few years in a collaborative and multidisciplinary manner.

‘These safe, evidence-based collaborative initiatives are the frontier of pharmacist prescribing in Australia and it is fantastic for the state’s workforce, and patients, that WA is stepping up and taking the lead.’

SHPA’s Residency Program is Australia’s first and only structured, formalised, supported and accredited national pharmacy residency program; to-date more than 500 pharmacists have completed or are undertaking Foundation Residencies nationally.

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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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