

Media release

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‘Care and dignity’: Hospital pharmacy meets rising aged care challenge

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) celebrates the [International Day of Older Persons](#) today, an opportunity to recognise the contribution of older people to Australian society and the health professionals who deliver the care and dignity our older people deserve.

The day of recognition comes after SHPA recently released revised standards of practice for the optimal pharmacy care of older patients, the Geriatric Medicine practice pathway for pharmacy residents and prepares to host a dedicated Aged Care session as part of the [2020 SHPA Virtual Congress \(VCON\)](#) in November.

Gauri Godbole, SHPA Geriatric Medicine Co-Chair says maintaining and improving the health of older persons is critically important.

‘The number of older persons worldwide is projected to double to more than 1.5 billion in 2050, driving the urgency of our efforts to empower not just geriatric medicine pharmacy specialists but a wider pharmacy workforce to improve their understanding of geriatric syndromes.

‘Released in February this year and led by the SHPA Geriatric Medicine Leadership Committee, SHPA’s [Standard of practice in geriatric medicine for pharmacy services](#) highlighted the need for pharmacists with specific geriatric medicine expertise to work as part of interdisciplinary teams to improve the safety and quality of care for older Australians in hospitals, residential aged care facilities and in the community.

‘SHPA is also driving efforts to expand this knowledge earlier in the careers of hospital pharmacists, with Geriatric Medicine embedded as one of the four initial practice pathways of SHPA Advanced Training Residencies, with an accompanying knowledge guide that is cognizant of the different practice settings in which pharmacists may be providing care for older persons.’

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the importance of optimal medicines management in this more vulnerable cohort is driving numerous strategic investments to enhance practitioner education and improve patient care.

‘Research shows up to 30 per cent of hospital admissions of people aged 65 years and over are medication-related and approximately half of these could be prevented.

‘Next week, SHPA’s [Masterclass in Geriatric Medicine](#) – driven by SHPA Geriatric Medicine Co-Chair Ivanka Hendrix – dives into the latest aspects of patient-centred, evidence-based care in geriatric medicine, from the management of Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia and pain management in older adults.

'Next month, the "[Aged Care in focus](#)" session at VCON spans findings from the Aged Care Royal Commission, person-centred approaches to dementia in aged care and hospital pharmacist roles in aged care facility support services during COVID-19.

'At the same time, leading hospital pharmacists are shaping ongoing discussions, such as through testimony to the Aged Care Royal Commission and input to the national baseline report on Quality Use of Medicines and Medicine Safety.

'Caring for our older patients is everyone's responsibility and we are proud to fully equip and support our members in this effort.'

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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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