

Media release

Thursday 15 August 2019

Australians set to benefit from new health care reform blueprint

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed the Commonwealth Government's commitment to improve access to medicines through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), as part of a new national health plan that will see \$435 billion invested over the next four years to improve Australia's health system.

Launched by Minister for Health the Hon. Greg Hunt MP at the National Press Club in Canberra yesterday, [Australia's Long Term National Health Plan: to build the world's best health system](#) provides a new blueprint for boosting health care in Australia, including guaranteeing Medicare, supporting public and private hospitals, improving private health insurance, prioritising mental health and preventive health and investing in health and medical research.

On behalf of members and the broader pharmacy profession, SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels welcomed the plan and its central goal 'to make Australia's health system the world's number one'.

'As custodians of 20 per cent of PBS expenditure, hospital pharmacists are essential to ensuring the safe and optimal use of some of the most cutting-edge medicines, which help manage many aggressive and complex diseases.

'Increased access to the latest, high-quality medicines through the PBS – many of which are managed by hospital pharmacists embedded in multidisciplinary hospital teams – will reinforce this pillar of the healthcare system, supporting optimal care for more Australians.'

The announcement came on the same day as [new commitments to tackle opioid-related harm in the community](#) – via smaller pack sizes for opioids from 1 January 2020, better labelling, warnings and consumer information for opioid medicines, and restrictions on the use of fentanyl patches – were announced by the Health Minister and welcomed by SHPA.

The new national health plan also outlines the government's commitment to increase funding for all Australian public hospitals, from \$100 billion between 2015–16 and 2019–20 to an estimated \$131 billion between 2020–21 and 2024–25.

'This additional investment in our public hospitals is an important step toward ensuring these centres of excellence maintain their capacity to innovate and implement advances in patient care.

'SHPA also welcomes the commitment to health and medical research – having recently establish a Research stream of Specialty Practice – and prioritising mental health and preventative health, two areas within which safe and quality use of medicines is essential.

'We look forward to working alongside government and partnering with key stakeholders to ensure these shared priorities are achieved.'

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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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