

Media release

Friday 25 March 2022

Win for aged care residents, pharmacists and medicines safety as new aged care funding announced

After years of leading the call for specialised, embedded Geriatric Medicine Pharmacists in residential aged care facilities, the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) enthusiastically welcomes the Hon Greg Hunt MP's announcement today at the Australian Pharmacy Professional (APP) Conference of nearly \$350m in funding for new embedded pharmacist positions to improve medication management and safety for aged care residents.

In December 2017, SHPA was the [first pharmacy organisation in Australia to advocate for embedding aged care pharmacists](#), a call reiterated in [successive pre-Federal Budget submissions](#) and through the [Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety](#).

SHPA President Peter Fowler says the new funding will help ensure early, expert intervention to protect vulnerable Australians from medicines misuse and harm.

'Pharmacy has a critical role in aged care, with Australian research indicating 91% of aged care residents take at least five regular medicines, and 65% take more than 10, every day.

'Since we first called for embedded aged care pharmacists five years ago, we are pleased to have seen other organisations adopt our recommendation pharmacist-to-resident ratio of 1:200, as per SHPA's [Standard of practice in geriatric medicine for pharmacy services](#) and the foremost recommendation of our submission to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

'With our members, who care for Australia's most acutely unwell, we will advocate for effective implementation of this new investment – including ensuring 1:200 pharmacist-to-resident ratios are met – so pharmacists can identify and manage medication-related issues before they lead to avoidable harm and preventable admissions to hospital.'

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says Hospital Pharmacists across the country will welcome the funding announcement following a successful trial in the Australian Capital Territory funded by the Commonwealth government.

'Our first formal call for embedding aged care pharmacists in 2017 paved the way for a federally funded two-year trial of dedicated, expert pharmacist presence in all 27 residential care facilities in the ACT to improve medication management.

'Today's funding announcement is a win for pharmacists, and SHPA looks forward to partnering with government, clinical agencies, our medical and pharmacy colleagues to ensure safe and effective implementation.

'When present in the right place at the right time, pharmacists can identify deprescribing opportunities and foster high quality clinical handover as patients move between care settings, which is vital for their

wellbeing and quality of life, and to reduce the incidence of the 250,000 medication-related hospital admissions costing Australia's healthcare system \$1.4 billion annually.'

– ends –

For more information contact:

Susie Brown, Communications and Media Advisor
sbrown@shpa.org.au | 0437 119 286

About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional organisation for the 6,300+ 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.

shpa.org.au |   