

# Media release

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## Victorian Government spends big on hospitals and workforce, Hospital Pharmacists must be included to ensure quality and safety

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists Australia (SHPA) has welcomed investment of more than \$12 billion into Victoria's hospitals and healthcare system and workforce, announced yesterday by Victorian Treasurer, Hon Tim Pallas MP. The [Victorian Budget 2022/23](#) pledges to address Victoria's elective surgery backlog, bolster its healthcare workforce, and improve healthcare access for all Victorians by investing in more intensive care and emergency department services.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels welcomed the \$1.5 billion investment to address the backlog of elective surgery waitlists built up during the COVID-19 pandemic, now exceeding 89,000 patients, but calls for part of the investment to be directed toward embedding more Surgery and Perioperative Hospital Pharmacists into multidisciplinary teams if the government is to reach its goal of 240,000 surgeries annually by 2024.

'We strongly welcome the announcement of eight rapid access hubs at metropolitan hospitals for elective surgeries and call on the Victorian government to ensure investment into Surgery and Perioperative Hospital Pharmacists to support this commitment.'

'This cohort of Hospital Pharmacists reduce length of admission, improve bed flow and reduce incidence of serious medication errors for surgical patients by carrying out pre-surgery medication reviews, ensuring potentially fatal drug interactions and overdoses are avoided.'

The budget also outlines a commitment to bolstering Victoria's healthcare workforce, with plans for an additional 7,000 workers, including nurses and paramedics, and a global recruitment drive to bring home expat healthcare workers.

'Our Hospital Pharmacy departments have enthusiastically supported and provided resources to COVID-19 wards and clinical services, vaccine clinics, telehealth services, outreach programs and Better at Home, however these have mostly drawn on existing Hospital Pharmacist resources without sufficient support for regular hospital activities as we come out the other side of the pandemic, stretching the limits of workforce capacity and adding to the general level of burnout and stress experienced across our healthcare workforce.'

'Hospital Pharmacists have been critical to clinical care and timely medicines supply for Victorian patients over the COVID-19 pandemic, supplying critical COVID-19 infusible and oral medicines, as well as running vaccination clinics.'

'The expanded services planned for emergency departments and intensive care are much needed, but these must be staffed by Hospital Pharmacists according to SHPA's [Standard of practice in intensive care for pharmacy services](#) and [Standard of practice in emergency medicine for pharmacy services](#), which are already currently not being met, putting our most unwell and vulnerable patients at risk of medication errors that can be fatal.'

'These additional 7,000 healthcare workers must include pharmacists who have been essential to ensuring timely and quality medicines management and medicines supply for new and innovative care models necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the Better at Home program.'

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**For more information contact:**

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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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