

Media release

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Hospital Pharmacists welcome extended consultation on National Medicines Policy

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has today welcomed the extension of consultation on updating Australia's National Medicines Policy (NMP) as essential to ensuring appropriate input from Hospital Pharmacy, the profession that oversees nearly one quarter of the growing Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) budget, and the majority of its specialised, high-cost listings.

Yesterday, Federal Health Minister, the Hon Greg Hunt MP announced the consultation period for the updated NMP would be extended until after the Federal Election in May 2022.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says Hospital Pharmacists have supported the long-awaited review of the NMP as the medicines landscape has shifted significantly in the past 20 years.

'Lauded worldwide, Australia's PBS is one of the most important health programs that impacts the lives of all Australians, ensuring medicines are affordable, and supporting the principles of timely access and quality use under the NMP.'

'In the past 20 years, Hospital Pharmacists have gone from accounting for 0%, to 24% of PBS expenditure in the most recent financial year, representing over \$3 billion across 4.9 million PBS prescriptions.'

'We are thankful that Minister Hunt has extended the NMP review to ensure there is further consideration of the diverse and comprehensive feedback from medical, pharmacy, pharmaceutical industry, allied health and consumer stakeholders.'

Ms Michaels says the expertise of Hospital Pharmacists is essential to the safety and sustainability of the PBS as a pillar of Australian health care.

'The majority of new specialised, high-cost PBS listings over the past decade require the safe hands of Hospital Pharmacy, as these complex medicines are initiated and supplied in hospital settings under the supervision of Hospital Pharmacists, Technicians and their medical and nursing colleagues.'

'SHPA looks forward to working with all government stakeholders after the election on the revised NMP, to ensure its revision is fit-for-purpose and reflects how much healthcare delivery and medicines use has changed.'

'This includes updating the NMP to factor in the findings and recommendations from two concurrent reviews that significantly impact acutely unwell patients and the Hospital Pharmacy sector: the *Review into Section 100 Efficient Funding of Chemotherapy* and the *Review of Pharmaceutical Reform Agreements*.

'These simultaneous reviews are required urgently, but we must get them right.'

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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.

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