

# Media release

Tuesday 15 March 2022

## WA's Kerry Fitzsimons recognised with SHPA Medal of Merit

Recognising her outstanding leadership and contribution to medication safety in Western Australia and beyond, Kerry Fitzsimons was announced today as the recipient of the 2021 Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) Medal of Merit.

Ms Fitzsimons – who is the Manager of the Medicines and Technology Unit, Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Directorate within WA Health's Clinical Excellence Division, has been the Chair of SHPA's WA Branch for the past five years (currently Vice Chair), and is a member of SHPA's Medication Safety Leadership Committee – was awarded for her leadership amongst the WA pharmacy community, demonstrated in her role in leading the state's COVID-19 vaccination program as well as her achievements in advocating for medication safety, as a research collaborator, and mentor to early career pharmacists.

In their recommendation, SHPA Director Deirdre Criddle and SHPA WA Branch Chair Peter Smart said it was no surprise when Ms Fitzsimons was given immediate responsibility for leading the WA COVID-19 vaccination program as part of the State Health Incident Control Centre vaccine preparation process.

'It quickly became apparent she was the perfect choice. The ability to combine and utilise her research skills, leadership expertise, broad pharmacy and clinical network and highly developed understanding of the medicine's logistics and governance landscapes, would all prove critical for ensuring this project's success.

'It is almost impossible to understate the efforts of Kerry (and others like her) in keeping our community safe and our system in readiness for what has been, and continues to be, a once in a lifetime international health crisis.

'With knowledge and understanding moving at a rate not previously seen in an infectious disease response, information that was relevant one day was surpassed the next. This made her achievements of bringing together policy and guidelines to support and inform the roll out both an incredibly complex task and a herculean achievement.'

Additionally, Ms Fitzsimons is recognised for the impact of her work in supporting medication governance across WA as well as forging career opportunities for Hospital Pharmacists: 'Her leadership and preparedness to speak up for safety have been vital to her success and Kerry continues to underscore the value of pharmacists in these strategic positions. Her work to ensure opportunities for pharmacists to expand their horizons beyond the traditional hospital career paths is something that the profession should not underestimate.'

Ms Criddle and Mr Smart also highlighted Ms Fitzsimons' defining characteristic: her consideration for her colleagues and patients.

'She always has time, for anyone who shows interest in our profession or asks for assistance. She shows empathy, wears her heart on her sleeve and retains a healthy sense of humour.'

Ms Fitzsimons will formally accept the 2021 SHPA Medal of Merit and deliver her oration at Medicines Management 2022, the 46th SHPA National Conference this November.

– ends –

**For more information contact:**

Susie Brown, Communications and Media Advisor  
[sbrown@shpa.org.au](mailto:sbrown@shpa.org.au) | 0437 119 286

**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.

[shpa.org.au](http://shpa.org.au) |   