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It is time to support hospital-initiated medication reviews

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) CEO, Kristin Michaels today called for joint Commonwealth and State action to reduce preventable hospital admissions resulting from poor management of medications.

“Australia must take priority action to improve medicines management,” she said.

“There is robust evidence that 2-3% of hospital admissions are medicines related and there is evidence of substantial problems associated with patient discharge processes that could lead to avoidable and preventable medication errors,” Ms Michaels said. “Among the elderly population medicines-related hospital admissions rise to 30%.”

Ms Michaels said the Hospital Outreach Medication Review (HOMR) service at Monash Health was an excellent model for proactive enhancement of medication safety.

“The just-published research from Monash Health showed that hospital outreach medication reviews, led by pharmacists, can reduce hospital readmissions by 25% among people aged between 51 and 65 years. It is absolutely essential that we do not ignore the results of this research,” Ms Michaels said.

“While some medications errors can be attributed to patient misunderstanding or confusion, one of the major causes of significant problems with medications is the divide between hospitals and primary health care,” Ms Michaels said.

“The Home Medicines Review (HMR) Program has had some impact but it needs to be redesigned to better serve the needs of the patients, in line with the approach taken to the Health Care Homes model.”

“SHPA has been an advocate for better medicines management for many years. We are keen to collaborate with governments to improve protocols and actions to ensure patients are not put at risk from inadequate medicines management, especially when care is transferred between hospitals and primary care.”

“We are also well positioned to support the design and implementation of hospital-initiated home medication reviews which must be considered as a national health priority,” Ms Michaels said.

Ms Michaels said her call for action is supported by evidence presented in the most recent issue of the [Journal of Pharmacy Practice and Research](#).

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national professional organisation for more than 3,600 pharmacists, pharmacists in training, pharmacy technicians and associates working across Australia's health system. SHPA is the only professional pharmacy organisation with a core base of members practising in public and private hospitals and other health service facilities.

SHPA is committed to facilitating the safe and effective use of medicines, which is the core responsibility of pharmacists, especially in hospitals. SHPA supports pharmacists to meet medication and related service needs, so that both optimal health outcomes and economic objectives are achieved for Australians, as individuals, for the community as a whole and for healthcare facilities within our systems of healthcare.