

Thursday 23 February 2017 **For immediate release**

## Leadership and expertise in practice as hospital pharmacist mitigates medicine contamination

The crucial role of hospital pharmacists in protecting Australian patients through the identification and confirmation of imitation medicines was evident Wednesday night when ABC's 7.30 program revealed [details of counterfeit Viagra contaminating supply](#) in New South Wales.

The 2010 incident is currently under investigation, with the pharmacist who supplied the drugs appealing the cancellation of his registration.

During recent proceedings, NSW Health stated the fakes were noticed by a hospital pharmacist at Sydney Children's Hospital before being given to patients; Viagra, a product of Pfizer, can be used to treat children with pulmonary hypertension.

Kristin Michaels, CEO of the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia says the incident – in which counterfeit stock was sent to more than 260 pharmacies and three further other hospitals – highlights the crucial role hospital pharmacists play in protecting the integrity of Australia's medicine supply.

'Looking back this was a near-miss, but the implications for patient safety could have been far worse were it not for the hospital pharmacist's vigilance and proactive response.

'This incident is clear evidence the leadership of specially-training hospital pharmacists is a critical bulwark protecting the broader community from potentially dangerous counterfeit products.'

Ms Michaels says hospital pharmacists are uniquely placed to deploy medicines management expertise and ensure quality and safety.

'Equipped with broad and evolving knowledge on the latest in medicine innovations, supply shortages and potential fraud, hospital pharmacists possess the initiative and confidence to intervene and ensure the right medicine is delivered to the right patient.

'SHPA will welcome the findings of the current investigation and is committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure the security and reliability of Australia's medicine supply is absolutely world class, to complement the world class healthcare all Australians rightfully expect.'

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## About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national professional organisation for more than 4,000 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.

**The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia** |