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Crucial pharmacy workforce study released

A white paper presenting the findings of the Pharmacy Technician and Assistant Role Redesign within Australian Hospitals project was released today at SHPA's Medicines Management 2016 Conference in Perth.

"This is another example of SHPA delivering on its commitment to pharmacy workforce transformation," said SHPA CEO Kristin Michaels.

"Pharmacy technicians and assistants play critically important roles in medicines management in hospitals and it is essential that we understand changes in the dynamics of medicines supply in hospitals and how this will impact on these important roles in the future."

Consistent with the International Pharmaceutical Federation's (FIP) Workforce Development Goal 12, there can be no strategic workforce development without workforce intelligence data.

"The project was comprehensive and undertook a literature review; a review of supporting frameworks; and additional primary research including a national survey, three focus groups, six structured interviews with key stakeholders, and four case studies of innovative practice," said Ms Michaels. "The national survey received 154 responses representing 170 hospital pharmacies."

"Pharmacists are progressively moving away from dispensary based supply functions and are transitioning to team based patient-centric roles. Therefore, the need to effectively harness the technician and assistant workforce to support advancing hospital pharmacy services is crucial," said Ms Michaels.

"Australian hospital pharmacy technicians and assistants are underutilised compared to their OECD peers, and there are limited opportunities for pharmacy technicians and assistants seeking career advancement in Australia."

"Our five recommendations, arising from the report, provide opportunities to address current issues around enhanced roles, improved education and training, and better professional development pathways," she said.

SHPA's Federal Council has commissioned further work as per the white paper recommendations that will see active change to this workforce. Both the full white paper and a summary document are now available on the SHPA website at <https://www.shpa.org.au/pharmacy-technician-assistant-training>.

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national professional organisation for more than 4,500 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.