

Thursday 30 March 2017 **For immediate release**

## Minister's intervention best for patients

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) applauds the intervention of the Federal Minister for Health, The Hon. Greg Hunt to support MedsASSIST, the real-time recording and monitoring system for medicines containing codeine.

The system, developed by the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, was scheduled to be discontinued nationally from Thursday 30 March 2017, ten months ahead of regulatory changes that will see codeine-containing medicines classed as prescription-only medicines.

Kristin Michaels, CEO of SHPA says while the system could be improved, it provides an important safeguard against medicine misuse and diversion, and empowers clinicians to provide higher quality care to patients using medicines containing codeine.

'While SHPA acknowledges limitations in the scope of MedsASSIST, we agree that the role it has played in the monitoring the supply of codeine-containing medicines is an important one, and unique in Australia.

Currently Tasmania is the only state committed to ongoing real-time prescription monitoring (RTPM) to monitor the use of medicines with risk of dependence, diversion or misuse, with promising results prompting the Victorian Government to commit to building such a system in the coming year.'

Ms Michaels says today's intervention by the Health Minister shows the value of a nationwide system of monitoring the dispensing of medicines to support patient safety.

'Our members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

'On their behalf, SHPA supports all government initiatives that prioritise patient safety and seek to improve the medicines management pathway, a crucial component of clinical excellence and quality medicines management across Australia's healthcare system.'

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**For more information contact:**

Nick Sharp-Paul, Communications Manager, [nsharp-paul@shpa.org.au](mailto:nsharp-paul@shpa.org.au) 0411 098 838

## **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.