

Media release

Monday 23 March 2020

Rapid nationwide response as pharmacists rush to join hospital relief register

An enormous response from the Australian pharmacy community has seen hundreds sign up to provide emergency staffing relief as our hospitals prepare for the growing impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Less than three days since the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA)'s [COVID-19 Hospital Pharmacy Relief Register](#) opened [on Friday night](#), more than 250 pharmacists, technicians and pharmacy students – hailing from every state and territory – have joined the database of staff willing to work with hospitals suffering a staff shortage due to COVID-19.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the rapid response is an edifying show of solidarity within the profession, but that there is no time for complacency.

'Preliminary data shows around one-third of registrants have more than six months experience in hospital, so we will continue our call for pharmacists from all career stages to join the register to help ensure Australia is in the strongest possible position over the critical weeks to come.'

'Pharmacists with experience working in Emergency Departments or Intensive Care Units, who are available to return to the hospital workforce or increase their workload to provide emergency relief, will be especially sought after.'

Ms Michaels says the unity of hospital pharmacy has been inspiring as the broader healthcare profession continues at pace to plan the continuation of optimal patient care.

'SHPA's call to arms generated more than 20 times the traffic of a typical Facebook post and there are 39 live threads on our "COVID-19 member forum" discussion page, which we've opened to non-members given the urgency of the crisis and the need to keep vital information flowing freely.'

'Our bi-weekly COVID-19 Management Meetings of Directors of Pharmacy and Chief Pharmacists will also continue into April, to ensure our centralised "COVID-19 Hospital Pharmacy Preparation Checklist" is up-to-date and in the hands of every department leader.'

'As confirmed cases of COVID-19 continue to double every three to four days, SHPA is resolute in its commitment to ensuring hospitals are staffed by skilled and healthy practitioners and our hospital pharmacists are equipped and supported to lead through these incredibly challenging circumstances.'

– ends –

For more information contact:

Nick Sharp-Paul, Head of Strategy and Communication
nsharp-paul@shpa.org.au | 0411 098 838

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 |   