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SHPA welcomes PBS protections and patient savings in 2017 Budget

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) commends the Federal Government on its 2017 Health Budget, which includes \$2.8bn extra for hospital funding, new protection for the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and measures to reduce out-of-pocket PBS costs, and commitment to some hospital pharmacy initiatives.

SHPA CEO Kristin Michaels says the Budget delivers promises and assurances to a broad spectrum of stakeholders, from medicines wholesalers to patients and consumers.

'SHPA welcomes the priority and importance the Turnbull Government has placed on medicines, with this Budget recognising the importance of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) as a key pillar of Australia's healthcare system.'

Mandatory and tiered price reductions will apply to current patented medicines in the F1 formulary category from 1 July 2018, while medicines that move from F1 to F2 formulary and lose their patent will face a mandatory price reduction of 25 per cent (up from 16 per cent).

'SHPA is pleased to see the majority of these savings generated from pricing policies – \$1.8b across the next five years – will not only reduce out-of-pocket costs for Australians, but will be used to fund new medicines listings to the benefit of all Australians,' Ms Michaels said.

'Hospital pharmacists, who facilitate 20 per cent of PBS expenditure, manage the dispensing of an overwhelmingly higher proportion of generic medicines than their community pharmacist counterparts, and will therefore play a key role in aiding the government in achieving these PBS savings.'

The Australian Government has also committed to unlocking \$600m of unused funds under the Sixth Community Pharmacy Agreement to continue and expand existing cognitive pharmacy services from 1 July 2017.

'SHPA anticipates the extra funding for cognitive pharmacy services in the 6CPA will provide for essential pharmacy services, that are supported by evidence, to improve the quality use of medicines and improve the health of all Australians,' Ms Michaels said.

'In particular, it would be very welcome to see the hospital referral pathway for the Home Medicines Review program progressed.'

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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.