

Media release

Friday 29 May 2020

SHPA welcomes strong hospital investment after powerful COVID-19 collaboration

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed significant investment in Australia's hospital system after Prime Minister Scott Morrison this afternoon announced a 26 per cent increase in funding over the next five years.

The signing of the 2020-25 National Health Reform Agreement allocates \$131.4bn for public hospitals across the country, commencing 1 July 2020, in addition to more than \$8bn in investment from the Commonwealth Government during Australia's national COVID-19 response.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says the agreement, signed by all states and territories, reflects the importance of Australia's hospitals to the health and wellbeing of the nation.

'In 2020 we have seen the immeasurable value of our internationally highly regarded hospital system, and the dedication and expertise of our hospital pharmacists and their colleagues.

'The speed of Australia's national COVID-19 preparations, and subsequent timeline for states and territories to begin easing restrictions, hinged on the ability of our hospitals to expand ICU capacity and ensure any steep increase in Australians requiring intensive care for COVID-19 symptoms could be managed.

'Hospitals rose to this challenge, and this increased funding will help lock in system-wide gains in understanding and efficiency made over the last few months.'

In this afternoon's announcement, Mr Morrison also announced the National Cabinet – introduced to coordinate the national COVID-19 response – would continue to meet regularly, replacing the Coalition of Australian Governments (COAG).

Ms Michaels says the new efficacy in federal-state relations bodes well for important medicines policy reform.

'On behalf of our members, SHPA welcomes the Prime Minister's move to prolong the positive working relationship fostered between levels of government through the National Cabinet during the coronavirus pandemic.

'Simplifying important health funding negotiations should sharpen focus on the needs of the Australian community and barriers to the safe, consistent, quality use of medicines.

'SHPA will continue to advocate for equal access for all Australians to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) – which will bolster PBS revenue to the states, supporting the National Cabinet's core objective of jobs generation – amid other national reforms focused on improving health outcomes.'

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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.

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