

## Position statement

### **Clinical pharmacy services optimise patient health outcomes and care**

Clinical pharmacy services underpin the ability for organisations to achieve accreditation under many of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care's (ACSQHC) *National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards*, in particular Standard 4: Medication Safety (mandated and assessed in health service accreditation); ACSQHC's *Australian Safety and Quality Goals for Health Care*; and support the Australian Pharmaceutical Advisory Council (APAC) *Guiding principles to achieve continuity in medication management*.

Clinical pharmacy services are delivered to minimise the inherent risks associated with the use of medicines, increase patient safety at all steps in the medicines management pathway, and optimise health outcomes for patients. Pharmacists have been providing clinical pharmacy services to hospital-based patients for over 40 years.

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has released the new *SHPA Standards of Practice for Clinical Pharmacy Services*. Clinical pharmacy services for individual patients, as described in the Standards, are required to support the objectives of national safety and quality initiatives. They facilitate the continuity of medication management when patients transition between care settings and are applicable in all healthcare sectors and care settings.

The 2013 Standards should be used by hospital executives and health service managers to identify and inform the delivery of the best possible clinical pharmacy services for their patients and support the organisation's medication risk management strategy.

## Position

**Comprehensive and accountable clinical pharmacy services are an essential component of contemporary team-based healthcare and support the patient's right to safe and high quality care.**

SHPA's position is that every patient has the right to receive the right medicine at the right time. Access to clinical pharmacy services is essential to ensure safe and effective medication management, use and delivery, for patient safety and quality of care across all care settings and specialties.

SHPA's position is that clinical pharmacy services delivered to individual patients are integral to the success of an organisation's medication risk management strategy and vital to supporting medication safety programs, along with implementing and sustaining other medication safety initiatives.

SHPA emphasises the need to maintain adequate staffing levels of pharmacists to effectively provide clinical pharmacy services when they are needed, irrespective of the setting in which care is provided.

SHPA emphasises that all healthcare organisations undergoing change, rationalisation of services and review of their workforce needs, must undertake full clinical risk management or assessment to ensure that clinical pharmacy services are provided effectively and are adequately resourced.

SHPA fully supports medication safety as a priority area as described by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care which aims to improve the safety and quality of medication usage: *reduce harm to people from medications through safe and effective medication management*.

---

## The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia

Mailing address: PO Box 1774 Collingwood 3066 Victoria Australia

Office location: Suite 3, 65 Oxford Street Collingwood 3066 Victoria Australia

T: 61 3 9486 0177 F: 61 3 9486 0311 E: [shpa@shpa.org.au](mailto:shpa@shpa.org.au) W: [www.shpa.org.au](http://www.shpa.org.au)

## Background

Clinical pharmacy services are known to be cost effective.

International evidence demonstrates they are associated with reduced morbidity, reduced hospital mortality rates and decreased medicine-related incidents. A major Australian hospital-based study found that for every dollar spent on a clinical pharmacist to initiate changes in medicines therapy or management, approximately \$23 was saved on length of stay, readmission probability, medicines, medical procedures and laboratory monitoring. The actions of the clinical pharmacist had an impact on patient health outcomes with 1.1% considered to be life saving and more than a quarter judged to be of major clinical significance.

Medicine-related incidents remain the second most common type of incident reported in hospitals in Australia. Safe and effective use of medicines is the core business of pharmacists across all healthcare sectors. Their specialised education, training and expertise related to medicines enables them to focus on medicines, and provide support to patients and other members of the healthcare team.

Pharmacists are frontline healthcare practitioners. Working alongside medical and nursing staff, they provide direct, at the bedside care to patients from presentation and admission to discharge, as well as in outpatient clinics, in aged care facilities and in primary care. Pharmacists delivering clinical pharmacy services serve the interests of individual patients in the various hospital specialties, as well as the wider community by ensuring that medicine therapy is optimal, safe and cost-effective.

Clinical pharmacy services comprise a range of activities, as documented in the *SHPA Standards of Practice for Clinical Pharmacy Services*, and include:

- Medication reconciliation
- Assessment of current medication management
- Clinical review, therapeutic drug monitoring and adverse drug reaction management
- Contribution to the medication management plan
- Providing medicines information
- Facilitating the continuity of medication management on discharge or transfer
- Participation in interdisciplinary ward rounds and meetings
- Training and education
- Participating in research
- Quality improvement activities and peer review.

These activities are recognised as key components of medication safety and the quality use of medicines. Clinical pharmacy services underpin the ability for organisations to achieve accreditation under many of the ACSQHC's *National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards*, in particular Standard 4: Medication Safety.

## Updated and approved by SHPA Federal Council – October 2013

Replaces *Position statement: Clinical pharmacists improve patient outcomes*. August 2003

### References for background information

1. Chisholm-Burns MA, Lee JK, Spivey CA, Slack M, Herrier RN, Hall-Lipsy E, et al. US Pharmacists' effect as team members on patient care. Systematic review and meta-analysis. *Med Care* 2010; 48: 923-33.
2. Bond CA, Raehl CL. Clinical pharmacy services, pharmacy staffing and hospital mortality rates. *Pharmacotherapy* 2007; 27: 481-93.
3. Borja-Lopetegi A, Webb DG, Bates I, Sharott P. Association between clinical medicines management services, pharmacy workforce and patient outcomes. *Pharm World Sci* 2008; 30: 411-50.
4. Bond CA, Raehl CL, Franke T. Clinical pharmacy services, hospital pharmacy staffing, and medication errors in the United States hospitals. *Pharmacotherapy* 2002; 22: 134-47.
5. Dooley MJ, Allen KM, Doecke CJ, Galbraith KJ, Taylor GR, Bright J, Carey DL. A prospective multicentre study of pharmacist initiated changes to drug therapy and patient management in acute care government funded hospitals. *Br J Clin Pharmacol* 2004; 57: 513-21.
6. The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia, SHPA Committee of Specialty Practice in Clinical Pharmacy. SHPA standards of practice for clinical pharmacy services. *J Pharm Pract Res* 2013; 43 (suppl): S1-S69.
7. Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC). National safety and quality health service standards. Sydney: ACSQHC, 2012.

SHPA Medicines in Focus FACT SHEET Clinical pharmacy services. Optimising patient health outcomes. Available from <[www.shpa.org.au/News/Fact-Sheets](http://www.shpa.org.au/News/Fact-Sheets)>