



**The Hon Greg Hunt MP**  
Minister for Health

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

25 September 2020

### **World Pharmacists Day 2020: \$25 million investment to improve the safe use of medicines through pharmacy**

The Morrison Government will invest \$25 million through the landmark Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) for research to improve the safe use of medicines and medicines intervention by pharmacists.

The new *Quality, Safety and Effectiveness of Medicine Use and Medicine Intervention by Pharmacists* MRFF Grant Opportunity will support the *Quality Use of Medicine and Medicine Safety* National Health Priority, and is part of the Government's significant ongoing investments aimed at improving access to medicines and the safe use of medicines in the community.

On World Pharmacists Day, our Government acknowledges the outstanding work of Australia's pharmacists and pharmacy staff in communities across the nation.

Community pharmacies have kept their doors open to support Australians throughout some of the most challenging times in our recent history, including bushfires, floods, drought and a global pandemic.

The Landmark \$18.35 billion Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement (7CPA) signed in June 2020 with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (Guild) and for the first time, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), strengthens the critical community pharmacy sector for the benefit of all Australians.

Two key improvements to community pharmacy programs through the 7CPA have now been finalised:

- From 1 January 2021, to help people take the right dose of medicine at the right time, changes to the Dose Administration Aids (DAA) program will increase the base cap of 30 to 60 services per week. This means pharmacists will be able to provide this important service to more patients each week
- From 1 January 2021 the Government will be boosting its investment in the Rural Pharmacy Maintenance Allowance (RPMA), to ensure people living in rural, regional and remote Australia have access to medicines and pharmacy services.

Our Government continues to provide essential support to Australia's pharmacists through the COVID-19 National Health Plan.

The existing medicines related COVID-19 measures, including the Home Medicines Delivery Service and Continued Dispensing emergency arrangements will also continue for a further six months in line with other COVID-19 health measures.

The Home Medicines Service, introduced in March 2020 as part of this Government's response to COVID-19, will continue to the end of March 2021 so people in home isolation or other vulnerable people can get the medicines they need delivered to their front door.

More than 1.1 million deliveries have been made by more than 4600 pharmacies through this service.

We have also extended the Continued Dispensing emergency arrangements to 31 March 2021, so people with chronic conditions can obtain their usual medicines at PBS prices, if they are unable to visit their doctor to get a new prescription. These emergency arrangements were implemented during the bushfires and will continue to provide additional flexibility for people during COVID-19 outbreak.

To better support telehealth arrangements as part of the COVID-19 National Health Plan, the Government has worked with the Australian Digital Health Agency, the Guild and the PSA, to fast track the implementation of Electronic Prescribing.

This will make it more efficient for pharmacists to dispense medicines and reduce prescribing and dispensing errors.

There are now more than 1,830 pharmacies across the country that are actively supplying medicines from electronic prescriptions with this number growing daily.

On World Pharmacists Day, the Australian Government thanks Australia's pharmacists and pharmacy staff for their work in supporting their patients and their community.

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### **More information regarding the *Quality, Safety and Effectiveness of Medicine Use and Medicine Intervention by Pharmacists* MRFF Grant program**

The first grant round of the *Quality, Safety and Effectiveness of Medicine Use and Medicine Intervention by Pharmacists* MRFF Grant Opportunity will allocate \$13 million to support medical research and medical innovation projects that create or adapt technologies, mechanisms or approaches for improving the quality, safety and effectiveness of medicine use and medicine intervention by pharmacists in primary health and transitions of care.

The intended outcome of the research funded by this grant opportunity is to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians by:

- promoting the safe and effective use of medicines, particularly in high-risk groups and settings such as the elderly, people with complex chronic diseases, rural and remote communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culturally and linguistically diverse people and communities, and aged care facilities
- reducing adverse drug events and medicine-related hospital admissions, including in primary and transitions of care.

The grant opens on 6 October 2020, with further information available at [www.grants.gov.au](http://www.grants.gov.au).

Medicines are the most common intervention in health care and contribute greatly to the health and wellbeing of Australians. However, medicines can also be associated with harm. Half of all medication related harm is preventable.

A coordinated national approach to identify and promote best practice to reduce medication harm will improve the health of Australians and ensure the health system remains sustainable.