

26 May 2019

PSA welcomes reappointment of Federal Health Minister

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) today welcomes the reappointment of the Hon Greg Hunt MP as Minister for Health.

PSA National President Dr Chris Freeman said PSA has an excellent working relationship with Minister Hunt and looks forward to continuing to work with him and the Morrison Government to make full use of pharmacists' expertise and clinical training improving access to care and medicine safety for all Australians.

"PSA welcomed Minister Hunt's commitment on behalf of the Government that they will declare quality use of medicines and medicines safety a National Health Priority Area. This is a vital step forward in addressing the alarming issue of medicine-related harm.

"Pharmacists with their unique expertise in medicines and medicine management are ideally placed to identify and help resolve these issues, and funding arrangements must reflect their skills, training and responsibility in this area. PSA looks forward to working with the Morrison Government on this health priority," Dr Freeman said.

PSA believes in the need to build upon the accessibility of community pharmacy and increased funding for the delivery of health care services such as vaccinations, medication management and minor illness care.

"We therefore appreciate the commitment from Minister Hunt that PSA will be a signatory to the upcoming 7th Community Pharmacy Agreement. PSA will be focused on ensuring that there is more funding allocated to expanding services delivered by pharmacists, addressing accessibility to primary healthcare, and improved medicines management. We stand ready to engage with the Government on this vital agreement," Dr Freeman said.

PSA also welcomes the appointment of Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck as Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians.

Dr Freeman acknowledged the Government's 2019-20 Budget commitment for a Canberra-based trial to embed pharmacists in aged care facilities to improve medication management.

"PSA's [Medicine Safety: Take Care](#) report showed that more than 90 per cent of residents in a residential aged care facility have at least one medicine-related problem and as many as 80 per cent are prescribed potentially inappropriate medicines.

"There is compelling evidence to support the greater role pharmacists should have in the aged care sector using their unique skills to improve decision making to ensure the safe and optimal use of medicines for older Australians.

"PSA looks forward to working with Minister Hunt and Senator Colbeck on this trial, and helping to inform further nationwide initiatives."

Dr Freeman said these commitments, among others, will further unlock the potential of pharmacists and allow them to improve healthcare access and outcomes for Australians, and reduce variabilities in care.

"PSA and the pharmacy profession look forward to continuing to work with the Morrison Government on improving the health outcomes of all Australians."

Media contact: Carly Lusk, *Public Affairs Officer* – 0487 922 176

PSA is the peak national organisation for pharmacists