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WA expands scope of pharmacist-administered vaccinations

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) welcomes today's announcement from WA Health Minister the Hon Roger Cook MLA to expand the scope of pharmacist-administered vaccinations.

PSA WA Branch President Dr Fei Sim commended the government's decision to allow pharmacists to protect more West Australians 16 years and over from dTpa (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis), MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) and meningococcal (ACWY).

"Allowing trained pharmacists to administer these vaccines will significantly increase the immunisation rates within the community," she said.

"While Australia has a strong childhood vaccination program, there are many areas in Australia with vaccination rates still below the level of coverage required for herd immunity, including for dTpa and MMR. Pharmacists can play a key role in addressing this issue."

Research has shown internationally and locally that pharmacists are considered highly accessible and enabling them to vaccinate against more preventable diseases will help reduce the burden on our already over-burdened healthcare system.

Independent research commissioned by PSA has revealed almost two-in-three Australians believe pharmacists should be able to administer a broader range of vaccinations. PSA commends the WA Government for enabling the profession to do just this.

The recent increase in measles cases in Australia, highlights the need to increase the accessibility of this vaccine and the need for a national approach to pharmacist-administered vaccinations.

"PSA continues to advocate for a national approach to pharmacist-administered vaccinations to reduce confusion, ensure better access for patients to quality vaccination services and utilise the pharmacy workforce appropriately," Dr Sim said.

"The introduction of pharmacist-administered MMR vaccinations in Western Australia is a great step forward, leaving Tasmania and the ACT as the only two jurisdictions where pharmacists cannot vaccinate against these diseases."

The administration of vaccines by pharmacists complements the excellent work done by GPs, nurses, Indigenous Health Workers and other immunisers.

PSA commends the WA Government for making use of pharmacists' expertise and training to better protect the community against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Photo: PSA WA Branch President Dr Fei Sim

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