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## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

### All in for culturally safe care: Pharmacists urged to strengthen delivery of the PBS Closing the Gap Co-payment Program

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA), in collaboration with Advanced Pharmacy Australia (AdPha), the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia (the Guild), is calling on pharmacists and pharmacy staff to strengthen their commitment to delivering culturally safe care when supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through the Closing the Gap (CTG) PBS Co-payment Program.

With support from the pharmacy sector, the PSA is hosting a webinar during National Reconciliation Week to assist all pharmacy staff in navigating and strengthening the CTG PBS co-payment Program.

The National Reconciliation Week theme, 'All in for Reconciliation,' provides a timely opportunity for pharmacy organisations and NACCHO to come together and recognise that improving First Nations health outcomes is a shared responsibility.

PSA National President, Professor Mark Naunton MPS, said the CTG PBS Co-payment Program plays a vital role in improving access to affordable medicines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

"The CTG PBS Co-payment Program provides the opportunity to close the gap in health outcomes faced by First Nations Australians and foster equitable access to medicines," he said.

"Wherever you practice, whether you're a pharmacy assistant, technician, student, intern, or pharmacist, you play a role in ensuring First Nations peoples receive care that is considered culturally safe, respectful, and responsive. I encourage you to get involved and attend the upcoming webinar."

Mike Stephens, NACCHO's Director of Medicines Policy and Programs, emphasised the importance of developing and delivering culturally safe models of care.

"It's incredibly important that people feel safe when accessing CTG prescriptions, but we know this hasn't always been the experience," he said.

"PSA's webinar provides a great opportunity for pharmacists to nurture strong, community-level relationships by thinking about how and where conversations about the CTG PBS Co-payment Program are conducted, and what systems are in place to support these communities.

"We need all pharmacy staff to get involved, ensure the Program delivers the outcomes it intends to, and ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples receive culturally safe care."

AdPha President, Associate Professor Tom Simpson, said that with funding now available to expand the CTG PBS Co-payment Program, the focus must now shift to consistent, culturally safe implementation across hospital and primary care settings.

"We are proud to work collaboratively across the pharmacy sector to support stronger access to medicines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples," he said.

“After years of advocacy to improve equity between primary and acute care, it is critical that this program is implemented in a way that supports patients seamlessly as they move through the health system and ensures culturally safe care remains at the centre of every interaction.”

The Guild’s First Nations Pharmacy Network Chair, Linda Burney, noted:

“Through the CTG PBS Co-payment Program, community pharmacy teams help reduce cost barriers and support continuity of care for First Nations people.

“Delivering the program effectively requires culturally responsive practice, clear communication, and strong local relationships.

“The Guild is pleased to support this webinar and encourage pharmacy staff to continue building their understanding and confidence to provide care that meets the needs of First Nations communities.”

The PSA, AdPha, NACCHO, and the Guild are united in their commitment to ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples receive high-quality, culturally safe care wherever they access pharmacy services.

The webinar, *Stories that Drive Change: Pharmacy’s role in Closing the Gap*, will take place on Wednesday 27 May from 7.00-8.15 pm, on the first night of National Reconciliation Week.

Register here: [https://psa-org-au.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_70bmGfXNSlq2-PNOZDFNsQ](https://psa-org-au.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_70bmGfXNSlq2-PNOZDFNsQ).

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*The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia is the only national peak body that represents all of Australia’s pharmacists across all practice settings. We want every Australian to have access to the best healthcare, and this must include optimising access to pharmacists’ knowledge and medicines expertise at the forefront of our healthcare system.*

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*Advanced Pharmacy Australia (AdPha) is the progressive voice of Australian pharmacists and technicians, built on more than 80 years of hospital innovation that puts the patient at the centre of everything we do. AdPha supports all pharmacy practitioners, working with interdisciplinary teams across hospitals and health services, to realise their full potential. We are the peak body committed to forging stronger connections in health care by extending advanced pharmacy expertise from hospitals to everywhere medicines are needed.*

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*The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) is the national peak body representing 148 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) across Australia. It provides policy and budget advice to the government, advocating for community-based solutions that improve health outcomes. NACCHO is a major employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, with over 3,500 of the 7,000 employees in ACCHOs being First Nations.*

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*“The Pharmacy Guild of Australia (the Guild) is the national peak organisation representing community pharmacy. It supports community pharmacy to create healthier communities. Community pharmacy is the most accessible primary healthcare destination in Australia, with more than 6,000 locations open earlier, later, and longer than other healthcare options.”*