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Caring Together: Pharmacists to play bigger role in patient care

Additional clinical pharmacists will be introduced to public hospitals across the State as part of a raft of initiatives by the NSW Government to improve patient care and safety.

“This is part of the NSW Government’s *Caring Together: The Health Action Plan for NSW* developed in response to the Garling Report,” the Minister said.

“We are committing \$34.4 million over the next four years to employ an extra 64 Clinical Pharmacists in hospital wards.

“The Garling Inquiry recommends standard guidelines should be developed to involve pharmacists in patient care at the earliest opportunity.

“Expanding the role of clinical pharmacists within hospitals will improve patient safety by monitoring the type, quantity, past use and combination of prescription medicines.

“Hospital pharmacists will educate patients about their prescribed medications and advise junior doctors and nurses on the best use of medicines.

“Improvements in medication safety alone has the potential to reduce a patient’s stay in hospital, saving the hospital money and freeing up hospital beds for other patients.

“As Garling noted, each year, it is estimated about 140,000 hospital admissions are associated with inappropriate use of medicines across Australia costing the public hospital system about \$380 million each year.

“NSW Health will consider working with the private sector to support these initiatives where appropriate.

“The focus of the *Caring Together* action plan is to promote a culture in hospitals where the care and treatment of the patient is at the centre of everything we do,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“As the Garling Report points out, NSW has one of the better public health care systems in the developed world but we need to meet the challenges of the future, including a growing and ageing population.

“The strategies being announced today are the result of extensive consultation across the State and from working closely with doctors, nurses and other health staff.

“These initiatives are only the beginning of important changes to continue to deliver the best possible health care and to ensure on-going patient care and safety.

“The full details of the *Caring Together* initiative will be announced next week,” the Minister added.

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