

Media statement : NSW/ACT PHN Council Chair, Kate Loxton

30 July 2021

In response to the unfounded opinion aired by the National President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Adjunct Professor Trent Twomey, in a 27th July 2021 interview with Sally Sara during the ABC *World Today* program

“As Australians we are all in this struggle together. Success against this insidious virus will be achieved through a collaborative, supportive and partisan approach.

We thank our dedicated primary health network (PHN) employee teams who have volunteered to come into our offices to help our communities during Sydney’s lockdowns - from unloading pallets of personal protective equipment (PPE) stock, moving, and storing them around our offices, and then re-packing this stock ready for pick up by many local courier companies, or personally distributing the stock themselves,” said NSW/ACT PHN Council Chair, Kate Loxton.

Early last week Sydney PHNs received an additional allocation of PPE stock from the National Medical Stockpile to support all primary health care professionals in response to the current Sydney COVID-19 outbreak.

This additional PPE stock supplied is intended to enable all health professionals, including pharmacists, to see their customers safely during this outbreak, and at times when normal commercial supplies of PPE are unavailable or difficult to source.

This emergency PPE supply is not intended to replace normal commercial supplies and is not earmarked to support the day-to-day vaccine rollout in pharmacies, nor in general practice.

It is also important to note the Australian Government Department of Health has not yet given any formal role to PHNs in supporting the vaccine rollout through the pharmacy network.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, NSW/ACT Primary Health Networks have delivered a total of 603,940 surgical and P2/N95 masks to community pharmacies throughout NSW and the ACT and continue to do so.

The Australian Government’s National Stockpile of PPE is an emergency reserve, not for routine PPE supply. It is the expectation and policy of governments – federal and state – that health care providers including pharmacists source their own stocks of PPE and other clinical consumables as a normal operating cost of their business. <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-the-health-and-disability-sector/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-for-the-health-workforce-during-covid-19#accessing-ppe>

We can assure the residents of greater Sydney that their local Primary Health Networks continue to proactively work and respond to the latest outbreak of COVID-19 consistent with current Australian Government Department of Health guidance. We also reaffirm our commitment to supporting local pharmacies as part of a broader primary health care system and our dedication to ensuring that this whole system is continuously supported to deliver positive outcomes for our communities.

-ENDS-

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Damien Long - 02 9432 8231 or a/h 0403 821 307

E: dlong@snhn.org.au

Available for interview: Kate Loxton, NSW/ACT PHN Council Chair

About Primary Health Networks

PHNs have been established with the key objectives of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes, and improving coordination of care to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

NSW/ACT PHN websites

Nepean Blue Mountains: <http://www.nbmphn.com.au>

Capital Health Network: <https://www.chnact.org.au/>

Western NSW: <http://www.wnswphn.org.au>

Hunter New England and Central Coast: <http://www.hnecphn.com.au/>

South Eastern NSW: <http://www.coordinare.org.au>

Northern Sydney: <http://www.sydneynorthhealthnetwork.org.au>

Murrumbidgee: <http://www.mphn.org.au/>

North Coast: <https://hnc.org.au/>

South Western Sydney: <http://www.swsphn.com.au>

Central and Eastern Sydney: <http://www.cesphn.org.au>

Western Sydney: <http://www.wentwest.com.au>