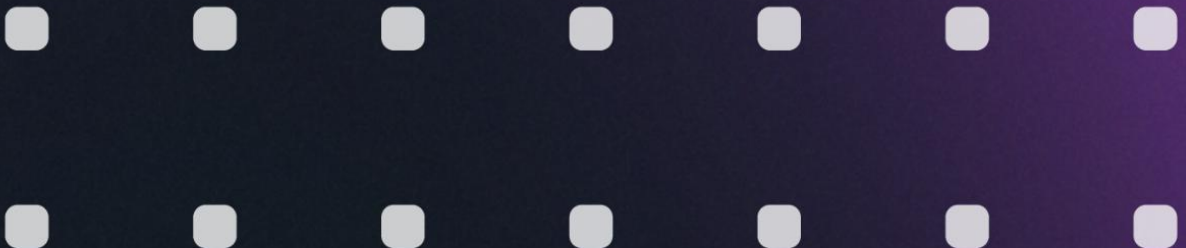




Shaping the Future of Prevention

Key Insights from Sciana's Roundtable at the
Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference 2025





The Power of Prevention

Sciana recently hosted industry experts exploring preventative healthcare's transformative potential in Australia. The discussion featured Sciana CEO Candice Smith, Insight Actuaries CEO Daniel Erasmus, HCF Head of Health and Wellbeing Linda Opie, and Amcal+ Pharmacy Owner Andrew Robinson, facilitated by Dr. Craig Nossel. This report highlights key insights on how pharmacies, insurers, and technology can revolutionise preventative health.

Australia's Preventative Health Paradox

Despite evidence that "every dollar invested in **preventative health saves** around **\$14.30** in healthcare and other costs," Australia **allocates** just **1.34%** of total health expenditure to prevention – approximately **\$89 per person annually**. Meanwhile:

- Chronic disease causes **83% of premature deaths**, costing **\$154 billion yearly**
- GP shortages have created a gap of over **34 million hours** of care-time
- Rising costs have led to **9.5%** of Australians **postponing GP consultations**
- **11%** of people in low socioeconomic areas **cannot afford prescribed medications**

As Daniel Erasmus observed, "we've built a system that responds to poor health outcomes rather than preventing them."





Unlocking the Potential of Community Pharmacies

Community pharmacies are an underutilised resource for preventative care, with the capacity to drive meaningful health interventions:

- Australians visit pharmacies an average of **18 times per year**
- A staggering **443 million patient visits** occur yearly across **5,800 community pharmacies**

Andrew noted that "healthcare is not just our business, it's the community's business" and that "we (pharmacists) can have a very significant impact in chronic care management."

Challenges Facing Pharmacy-Based Prevention

Pharmacy Preparedness

Three critical factors affect pharmacy readiness for preventative screenings:

- **Training:** Staff require targeted training for effective health screenings
- **Equipment:** Many screenings need specialised technology requiring upfront investment
- **Space:** Physical limitations necessitate dedicated consultation areas

The Funding Question

The panel explored several funding models for preventative health initiatives:

- **Government funding:** Doubling current preventative investments could prevent 50,000 hospitalisations and **save \$2.3 billion**
- **Private health insurance:** Linda noted that "prevention is all about shared value, it is about making our members healthy by empowering them with the tools to understand their health through education and screening"
- **Individual payment:** Cost-of-living pressures make direct consumer payment challenging
- **Corporate wellness programs:** Employer-funded screenings could reduce absenteeism and healthcare costs
- **Pharmaceutical partnerships:** Potential funding for screenings related to specific conditions

Daniel emphasised that "prevention is the golden ticket, it is the thing that will arrest the financial impacts to PHIs," particularly in light of the "actuarial death spiral" where young people terminate health insurance while older people retain coverage due to their higher claim rates.

To make preventative health a reality, insurers and government support are essential – to fund, incentivise, and reward members for prioritising their health.



Technological Innovations Transforming Prevention

Several technological advancements are revolutionising preventative healthcare delivery:

AI-Powered Screening Tools

- **NeuroFlex®:** AI-based concussion screening detecting subtle brain function changes
- **Eyeonic:** Advanced glaucoma screening without specialist referral
- **Xtra:** Utilise AI technology to triage patients with musculoskeletal conditions.

"Technology makes it so much easier to have screening done, than even 5 years ago," noted one pharmacy owner, while another added, "If we can make an interception in a patient's health early through screening, we can add years to their lives."





Point-of-Care Technologies

The integration of immediate diagnostic technologies empowers pharmacists to provide timely preventative guidance, reducing insurers' claims costs through earlier intervention.

A key takeaway from the session was the pharmacist's role as a direct, supportive healthcare partner. Their ability to help patients navigate vast amounts of health data and translate it into actionable insights is immensely powerful. This enables earlier detection, better adherence, and improved preventative care.

Pharmacists are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between health insights and patient action, reinforcing adherence and ensuring more informed, proactive healthcare decisions.

Point of care diagnostics play an important role in providing accessible and cost-effective screening but also assist in preventing complications from chronic diseases like diabetes by providing patients with the opportunity to engage with their pharmacist about how they are managing their condition.





Driving Patient Engagement

A Three-Step Approach

1. **Engage:** Proactive information sharing at prescription dispensing, leveraging in-store and digital content
2. **Nudge:** Apply behavioral economics principles such as making health checks the default offering
3. **Innovate:** Embrace AI to personalise health recommendations and empower pharmacists with data-driven insights

"Like you, we both have a trusted relationship with our members and patients, and through screening we have seen increased retention," shared Linda Opie from HCF.

Andrew Robinson emphasised that "our responsibility is to get on board with prevention and screening as a service, as we are all living longer lives," adding that "when we are intervening in treatment, whilst we can do it, it is expensive."



The Path Forward

The panel concluded that while systemic change is challenging, the shift to preventative healthcare is not just desirable but essential. As one participant noted, "We have to go from selling product to selling care."

Daniel Erasmus highlighted that "the pharmacy footprint, and reach, is very powerful," while another participant observed that "pharmacists can generate greater awareness of healthcare services by getting out there, with their team, in the local community."

"Start somewhere," advised Linda Opie. "As pharmacists, you are able to provide personalised support to patients."





Conclusion: Uniting for a Preventative Future

All roundtable attendees agreed on the significant potential that exists within the preventative health space. "We've tried many things... preventative health is the future," remarked one participant, capturing the collective sentiment in the room. Candice Smith summarised the opportunity: "Preventative healthcare is good for people and good for society... and a multi-billion dollar opportunity for insurers and pharmacies. "The integration of pharmacies, insurers, technology providers, and government efforts represents a powerful coalition for change - one where "wellness-first isn't just ideal—it's an economic and societal necessity.

"As the roundtable concluded, there was a palpable sense of commitment to collaborative action. While challenges remain, the path forward is clear: prevention must become the cornerstone of Australia's healthcare system, with pharmacies playing a pivotal role as accessible, trusted community health hubs. Sciana remains dedicated to supporting this vision by fostering connections between key stakeholders and driving innovation in preventative health solutions. As one participant powerfully noted, "We can impact patients' lives that outlive our own life."



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