



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

Health Reform Transition Office

National Health Reform



Update from the Health Reform
Transition Office

Transition Office CEO

Mr Graeme Head



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Context of national health reform

- The health and hospital sector is a complex mix of service systems - federal and state; public and private
- Pressures from an ageing population and high rates of chronic disease
- Sustained workforce shortages
- Service gaps and inequities in patient outcomes



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Heads of Agreement – National Health Reform

- Since April 2010 governments have been working to implement health reform
- New Heads of Agreement on National Health Reform signed by COAG on 13 February 2011
- National health reform is designed to create a unified health system
- Provides a better deal for patients – more money, more beds, more local control and more transparency



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Key elements of new agreement

- New financial arrangements – Commonwealth and states and territories will share equally in costs of growth funding in public hospitals
- States continue as public hospital system managers
- Increased transparency across the health system
- States retain GST
- Renewed focus on primary health care
- A commitment by the Australia Government to being responsible for a national aged care system



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Primary Health Care

- One of eight streams of focus for national health reform
- Strong primary health care critical for the sustainability of our health system
- Under Heads of Agreement governments will work together on policy and planning for GP and primary health care



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Primary Health Care under Heads of Agreement



Australian Government will have a lead role in primary health care reform:

- Bringing forward Medicare Locals and after-hours GP care reforms, and
- Establishing 64 GP Super Clinics.

Stronger focus on primary health care to ensure people receive care when and where they need it and take pressure off hospitals

States and territories will continue to be involved in the funding and delivery of primary health care



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Medicare Locals

- More Medicare Locals and more rapid implementation
- \$477 million over four years to establish Medicare Locals
- Medicare Locals will facilitate more integrated care and make it easier for people to move around the health system
- Locally focussed and accountable
- First group of Medicare Locals to commence from mid-2011



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Invitation to apply process

- Program guidelines and application forms available
- Initial group of Medicare Locals expected to be drawn from high performing Divisions of General Practice
- Applications for first group, to commence from July 2011, close on 5 April. For Medicare Locals commencing in 2012, applications close 19 July



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Governance of Medicare Locals

- Managed by skills based boards
- Appointment processes will be robust and transparent
- Strong linkages with the local health care sector, including Local Hospital Networks



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Locally focused and integrated health services

All governments recognise the importance of local responsiveness.

Medicare Locals, Local Hospital Networks and a new front end for aged care will work to:

- Integrate local services,
- Develop innovative local solutions,
- Improve linkages and referral pathways, and
- Give communities a greater say.

They will also work closely with Lead Clinicians Groups.



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Implementation Progress

Many building blocks of national health reform are now in place.

- Emergency departments and elective surgery improvements
- Invitation to apply for Medicare Locals issued
- Boundaries for Local Hospital Networks advanced
- MyHospitals website launched
- Major components for eHealth system in place
- National Preventive Health Agency established



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Next milestones

2011 a significant year in implementation:

- After-hours GP telephone based service
- Increased hospital and primary care information for the community
- National Health Performance Authority
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care
- Telehealth service being expanded
- Further work in mental health, dental health and aged care



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