

## GENERAL PRACTICE NETWORK LEADERSHIP GROUP (GPNLG)

# COMMUNIQUE

The first quarterly GPNLG meeting for 2011 provided an opportunity for the group to meet in Parliament House on day one with the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon and the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, the Hon Mark Butler. National Health Reform was high on the agenda for GPNLG members in their discussions with Nicola Roxon.

GPNLG consists of the elected Chairs and CEOs of the eight state and territory based organisations (SBOs) and the Australian General Practice Network (AGPN).

GPNLG members were keen to impress upon the Minister, the Network's capacity and readiness to assist the Federal Government in achieving its goals under the health care reforms. The group expressed concern regarding the coming COAG meeting on health reform noting the potential for an unravelling of the proposed reforms in the Government's desire to bring all states into the deal. Issues such as the Medicare Locals Invitation to Apply (ITA) and the process and timelines for transition for General Practice Networks into the formation of Medicare Locals, were also discussed with the Minister.

The Minister reiterated the Government's intent that the first group of Medicare Locals will be drawn from high performing General Practice Networks, preferably working in partnership with other organisations at a local level.

AGPN Chair, Dr Emil Djakic, presented Minister Roxon with the AGPN 2011-2012 Federal Budget Submission, highlighting the key elements including the Network's vision to secure early wins in nursing, telehealth, mental health, chronic disease and aged care access, within the Federal Government's national health reforms.

The Hon Mark Butler focused on the Federal Government's commitment to reform of the mental health and aged care sectors. Issues canvassed with the group included the mental health flexible care packages announced in the 2010 Federal Budget with \$60 million earmarked for services to be purchased by Medicare Locals and the rollout of those services. The Minister discussed with the group the recent Productivity Commission draft report into the aged care sector, noting the significant need for an overhaul of the sector given changing consumer needs and the increasing numbers in the ageing population.

### **National Health Reform**

GPNLG was briefed on progress under the National Transition Project including anticipated components of the Invitation to Apply (ITA) and the communications strategy. The National Transition Project will incorporate a large number of resources to be available to the Network including information on ITA support, governance issues, partnerships and engagement, organisational development, change management and population health.

The group canvassed the process for developing a structure for a national organisation that will support the proposed Medicare Locals and the need for a common marketing and branding strategy. A further meeting of the GPNLG will be held on 2 March 2011 to undertake further work on these two important issues.

### **Jurisdictional reports**

The following key themes identified from the SBO jurisdictional reports to convey to the AGPN Board included:

- The need for improved coordination between the Network and the Aboriginal Community Controlled Sector in relation to Closing the Gap and the service models possible through the initiative.
- The process for engagement with allied health at all levels.
- Identifying programs and models of care that will be first within the new Medicare Local infrastructure ie after hours care, chronic disease.

### **Mental Health**

GPNLG noted the work of the Minister's Mental Health Advisory Group which is currently developing priorities for a primary care perspective, identifying other supports for people with mental illness. The Group's priorities focus on children, youth, and adults with severe and persistent mental illness. A further priority is the role of eHealth in the provision of better access to information and referral pathways.

The group discussed the flexible care packages announced in the 2010-2011 Federal Budget, with \$60 m earmarked to provide care coordination for people with mental illness through services to be purchased by Medicare Locals. GPNLG also noted the process for consultation under the ATAPS program.

**Aged Care**

GNPLG discussed with the Hon Mark Butler, the Federal Government's plan to reform the aged care sector in light of the significant need for improvement in the sector, and the increasing number of the population involved. The Productivity Commission draft report into aged care was also a focus of discussion with the Minister with the Commission's final report due to be handed to the Government in June 2011.

**eHealth**

There was significant interest from GPNLG on elements of the eHealth draft strategy and issues around data governance and the role of the National eHealth Transition Authority (NEHTA) in driving the agenda. The group noted the gains that have been made in eHealth across the Network and the importance of mapping the work of each jurisdiction. AGPN awaits the outcome of the eHealth Readiness tender.

For further information on the meeting outcomes please contact your SBO.