



COMMUNIQUE

Meeting 2 – 3 February 2006

The SBO/ADGP Coalition, a strategic group comprised of the Chairs and CEOs of Australian Divisions of General Practice and the State Based Organisations for Divisions, held its first quarterly meeting for 2006 in Canberra on 2-3 February.

Issues arising from the Review Implementation Committee's activities were a central part of the agenda, and Coalition members met with senior representatives of the Department of Health and Ageing to discuss these matters. Key issues included:

- Plans for the rollout of the national IM/IT program for Divisions: This program, which will include a secure national Virtual Private Network, the appointment of several skilled health informatics personnel across the Divisions Network, and a data aggregation tool for GPs and Divisions, will begin to be implemented in the coming months. The Coalition identified the need for a Divisional e-health policy framework, and agreed to establish a national policy group to develop this, as well as consultation across the Divisions Network in informing this strategy. ADGP will ensure the Network is informed of progress on this initiative.
- Early feedback regarding 6 monthly reporting to the Department, and contract issues: The Department acknowledged the heavy workload involved, and the difficulties encountered, particularly with data. The Department indicated they will work with the Network following the current 6 month reporting process, to look at how the process can be improved; and that feedback will be provided on how the reporting captures the achievements of the Network.
- Progress with the development of a new funding formula for the Divisions network: The Funding Formula Working Group has delivered a preferred option to the Department for a future funding formula to address current anomalies and complexities. Any new formula is not likely to be introduced before July 2008, and will be preceded by modelling and consultation with Divisions.
- The national performance and development pool: Selection of successful projects will be undertaken shortly based on the expressions of interest process. Contracts and funding arrangements will be fast tracked to enable implementation of projects.
- The national governance training program and the national leadership program have been well received as positive examples of capacity-building initiatives with strong relevance for the Network.

The Coalition also discussed the Council of Australian Governments' health agenda, and the importance of the Divisions Network being identified by COAG as the provider of choice for the rollout of any primary health care initiatives under this agenda.

Based on discussion of policy development processes at the Coalition meeting, there are now plans to develop a documented process for Divisions Network policy development, particularly in relation to major position papers. Following the release of ADGP's Primary Health Care Position Statement in late 2005, the next major focus and policy paper development will be mental health.

Other major issues discussed by the Coalition included involvement of Divisions Network members in pandemic influenza planning; relationships between the Divisions Network and the Aboriginal community controlled health services sector; branding for the Divisions Network; and the role of the Divisions Network in practice support and practice management. Several of these issues will be on the agenda as major items for the next Coalition meeting in early June.

For more information on any of the items discussed above, please contact your SBO representative in your State or Territory.