

GENERAL PRACTICE NETWORK LEADERSHIP GROUP (GPNLG)

COMMUNIQUE

Meeting held in Canberra on Thursday 5 June and Friday 6 June 2008

CHAIR: Dr Tony Hobbs, Australian General Practice Network (AGPN)

The GPNLG discussed the Diabetes Type 2 Prevention Program – a Federal Government initiative. This initiative presents an opportunity for divisions to play a key role in prevention programs and continue to demonstrate their value to general practice. The role of divisions in this program will be to promote the utilisation of the item number, referral pathways and identify accredited service providers in their region. Divisions will also have the opportunity to provide accredited lifestyle modification programs to their members if they choose to.

A number of GPNLG projects and priorities to offer value-add services and support to members are nearing completion. The GPNLG will be promoting the GP Census Surveying Tool to divisions from 1 July 2008. GP Census has the capacity to assist divisions in the capture of some of the data for the Annual Survey of Divisions and the National Performance Indicators. The GPNLG is also set to embrace a network financial and human relations business system. As part of a coordinated effort to provide member services, divisions will also have the opportunity to pick up pre-negotiated commercial deals.

The GPNLG spent time discussing the Aged Care GP Panels and the transition funding available. The GPNLG agreed to present Government with an interim solution to take the program forward with an opportunity to mount a case for the 2009 Federal Budget process. The GPNLG also committed to using the downscaling of this program as a learning experience for the network in terms of the importance of data and the ability to demonstrate measurable outcomes.

A meeting was held with Dr Ruth Kearon from the Minister for Health and Ageing's Office. The GPNLG were briefed on the Government's policy agenda in primary health care and preventative care including the National Hospitals and Health Reform Committee Report and Preventative Care Taskforce. Dr Kearon emphasised in the meeting that the Government values the work of the divisions network. The GPNLG sought firm commitment from the Government moving forward that the primary health care rhetoric is expressed in terms of the Budget 2009. The GPNLG provided an example of innovation in the network (GP Census) to demonstrate the capacity of the group to deliver initiatives nationally. The GPNLG also expressed interest in being involved in the infancy of future ideas to advise on and assist to demonstrate health outcomes and improvements to patient care.

The GPNLG met with a representative from the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FACSIA) to discuss the Personal Helpers and Mentors Program. The GPNLG emphasised that divisions are already working in their local communities to get outcomes for patients and have a proven track record in this space. FACSIA has indicated a desire to involve divisions to build momentum in the program and will communicate further with the GPNLG in the coming weeks about the third round of funding.

Opportunities to work together and cross-fertilise activities to assist divisions to achieve the National Performance Indicators were also discussed by the GPNLG. Suggestions for further exploration include the development of marketing materials and the identification of GP Champions to promote quality improvement in general practice.

A range of strategic issues and operational matters put forward by members were also discussed including the:

- value in forming an Indigenous Health Network to link staff working at AGPN and SBOs in Indigenous health and to provide advice on the development of a resource kit to assist divisions to develop and mature relationships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services
- revision of the Primary Health Care Position Statement for relaunching at the Forum
- funding of the Chronic Disease Self Management network with a focus on population health
- core criterion and skill set divisions will need to have to deliver on service coordination models.

For further information please contact your State/Territory Based Organisation.