

Friday 4 November, 2011

Roll out of Medicare Locals on schedule

The development of Australia's reformed system for primary health care is past the halfway mark with the announcement this week of the 18 successful Medicare Locals for tranche 2, Australian General Practice Network Chair [AGPN], Dr Emil Djakic said today.

"The second tranche of Medicare Locals have been designed to start operating from January 2012 while the remaining 25 for tranche 3, some of which were also announced this week, will get started from July next year," Dr Djakic said.

"This latest development will consolidate much of what has been and will continue to be achieved for primary health care across Australia," he said.

"Already the reformed system for primary health care through the first tranche of 19 Medicare Locals, which were announced in July, has laid much of the ground work for tranches 2 & 3 – a deliberate process for rolling out such a massive reform program.

"As the consortium of General Practice Networks (GPNs) and other primary health care organisations re-configure to create 62 Medicare Locals across Australia, the public can be confident in knowing that behind the scenes the right people are on the job, managing the local health services needed for local communities.

"The implementation of Medicare Locals brings about a reorganisation and restructuring of the nation's primary health care system which will increasingly change the way in which consumers and health professionals negotiate their way through local health services.

"Medicare Locals are designed to reduce bureaucratic processes and provide greater access to a more streamlined system.

"General practice, nursing, allied health and other primary health care services are set to expand and become more flexible to best meet the needs of patients and their carers.

"After hours services will increase over time and opportunities with eHealth particularly through the personally controlled electronic health record system which is geared for patients and health professionals, will revolutionise the primary health care sector.

"The work already done by GPNs in ensuring the provision of a range of mental health and suicide prevention services will be strengthened, and there will be an increasing focus on health promotion, illness prevention, and chronic disease management," Dr Djakic said.

For a list of the tranche 2 & 3 Medicare Locals go to www.yourhealth.gov.au

Media contact: Karen Warner, AGPN Media Adviser on (02) 6228 0819/0438 179 520