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Genuine move towards better health care for all Australians

A power shift from acute to general practice care will improve the health and wellbeing of the nation, says Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) CEO Mr David Butt.

Mr Butt has welcomed the draft recommendations from the Government's National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission which calls for primary health care, the care you get from your GP and others in the care team, to be the foundation of the health system.

"GPs around the country have been calling for this recognition for years. Primary health care needs to be the focus of care if Government wants to achieve its aims of achieving value for money in health spending, improving health outcomes and reducing inequality of access and care," he said.

He identified a central role in the reform for the Divisions of General Practice Network, which boasts 95 per cent of all GPs as members.

"The Network is the ideal vehicle for creating regionally based enterprises as the foundation for population health planning, purchasing and patient engagement with the system. Some of our network members already do this very well, and very successfully, already," he explained.

Splitting State, Territory and Commonwealth funding is a 'no-brainer' according to Mr Butt.

"Blame shifting, fragmentation and red-tape are common in the current system - we need to get rid of it so patients stop falling through the cracks of the system and get good quality care," he said.

The Commission had recognised the important issue of addressing the eHealth and IT infrastructure needed to support these kinds of radical reforms.

"We need good eHealth solutions to improve the system; it's as simple as that. The types of changes being proposed will not work unless they are underpinned by good IT, and our rural colleagues will feel this oversight especially," he noted.

For media interviews please phone AGPN Communications Manager Frith Rayner on 0402 267 190