



## **GP GROUPS UNITED ON PRIMARY CARE REFORM**

United General Practice Australia (UGPA) – comprising the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Australian Medical Association, the Australian General Practice Network, General Practice Registrars Australia, the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine, and the Rural Doctors Association of Australia – met in Canberra today.

UGPA reached agreement on key areas of primary care reform and will urge the Government to consult closely with the medical profession as it progresses with the establishment of Medicare Locals and introduces changes to GP after-hours care and collaborative care arrangements.

Australia's peak GP groups call on the Government to ensure that there is strong GP leadership within Medicare Locals and that this is reflected in governance structures.

Quality general practice is the foundation of primary care and must be the foundation of Medicare Locals.

The key role of Medicare Locals must be to support high quality general practice care and ensure that there is effective interface and integrated care delivery with Local Hospital Networks (LHNs) and other key providers.

Proper integration between primary care and hospitals will be best achieved if the Medicare Local and LHN boundaries are linked and supported by efficient electronic health systems.

GPs understand the need for smooth integration between LHNs and Medicare Locals and must have a leadership role in governance arrangements to ensure a smooth implementation of the new arrangements.

UGPA stresses that there must be no fundholding arrangements in Medicare Locals for MBS and PBS.

UGPA reconfirmed its support for effective integrated care models involving general practice nurses and nurse practitioners as part of the practice team, with GPs having ultimate responsibility for overall patient care.

International evidence shows clearly that fragmentation of care leads to poorer health outcomes for patients.

In regard to new GP after-hours care arrangements, UGPA makes it clear to the Government that practices that are currently providing effective after-hours services in their communities must not be disadvantaged or deterred from continuing those services. They should be supported to continue and possibly expand their services.

UGPA urges the Government to consult with the profession and examine after-hours services that are locally responsive, serve a manageable population, and provide financial recognition that supports a sound business case for doctors and practices to provide quality after-hours care.

The Government should encourage replication of the best after-hours services through Medicare Locals.

The Government must continue to recognise that an appropriately-trained, high-quality workforce in sufficient numbers underpins all effective health reform.

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