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Development of Medicare Locals on track – just waiting for the tick

The Australian General Practice Network [AGPN] says the high response rate by the Network to the first round of the Invitation to Apply process to develop Medicare Locals is a clear demonstration of a network that is ready and willing to transform primary health care services across Australia.

AGPN Chair, Dr Emil Djakic said this first round attracted 58 applications from network members for all but five of the Medicare Local areas which is a remarkable achievement in a relatively short time.

“The Network is ready to reconfigure its primary health care services on a larger scale but on a more direct level with local communities within Medicare Local catchment areas,” Dr Djakic said.

“As of July this year, the first 15 Medicare Locals will start to implement for example:

- Flexible Care Packages for people with a severe mental illness
- eHealth program opportunities
- greater after hours capacity.

“Medicare Locals have been designed to build on what the General Practice Network has been doing for decades. The difference will be the larger scale of services, the expanded networking opportunities within the primary health care sector and the greater role in connecting care that will improve access to services.

“This is about the right care, at the right place at the right time,” Dr Djakic said.

“While the Federal Government has maintained a commitment to creating around 15 Medicare Locals from 1 July, AGPN is urging the Federal Government to support the commencement of as many as possible in this first round if more than 15 applications meet the eligibility requirements,” he said.

“The sooner these organisations can be established in communities across the country, the sooner the benefits to the local health system will flow to those communities.

“It has been no small feat for the Divisions of General Practice and their partners to prepare applications to meet the criteria for this first Invitation to Apply and AGPN has instituted a thorough and exhaustive process to ensure that the majority of applications tick all the boxes in the first tranche,” Dr Djakic said.

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