

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE ADVISORY GROUP

COMMUNIQUE No. 3

23 December 2015

Background

As part of the Government's commitment to maintain the current high levels of health outcomes and deliver a healthier Medicare, the Minister for Health, Sussan Ley, announced a number of key reform processes to ensure Australians continue to receive high quality health care supported by a sustainable and effective universal Medicare system. The Primary Health Care Advisory Group was established as a key component of this work.

The Primary Health Care Advisory Group has investigated options into the reform of primary health care to support patients with complex and chronic conditions, including mental illness.

The Advisory Group has now provided its advice to Government.

Overview of process

The Advisory Group came together in June 2015 to set out its work plan and to agree the areas of focus required to achieve effective care for those living with complex and chronic conditions. From June to December 2015, the Advisory Group met five times for face to face meetings and a series of working group meetings progressed work out of session.

The Advisory Group undertook a comprehensive national consultation process commencing in August 2015. Formal feedback was sought via an online survey, which closed on 3 September. Over 1000 survey responses were received, including 255 organisations and 770 individuals. Additionally, more than 70 written submissions were provided to the Group for consideration.

The consultations suggested that the following issues were among the most important for people with complex and chronic conditions:

- access to health services, especially low cost services;
- prevention measures and health education;
- the coordination of care across different health care services, involving multidisciplinary team care and effective communication and collaboration between different health care providers; and
- knowledge and understanding of complex and chronic conditions, and the associated care requirements for people with them.

An overview of the Consultation Process was provided in October through Communique 2.

The Advisory Group combined both international and domestic evidence with the findings of its own public consultation process to develop its advice to Government. Consistent with the consultation discussion paper, the report outlines reform options structured around four reform themes:

- *Effective and appropriate patient care*
- *System integration and improvement*
- *Payment mechanisms*
- *Achieving outcomes*

The theme of *better use of technology* is embedded throughout the report in recognition of its important role as an enabler and vehicle for implementation across all aspects of the reforms recommended.

Minister Ley attended the final meeting of the Advisory Group on 25 November 2015 and thanked the Advisory Group for its comprehensive approach to consultation and the commitment shown by all members to this process.