

Introducing Primary Health Networks

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Primary Health Care

A strong, responsive and sustainable primary health care system is one that improves health care for all Australians, especially those who currently experience inequitable health outcomes, by keeping people healthy, preventing illness, reducing the need for hospital services and improving management of chronic conditions.

Health Ministers, through the Standing Council on Health (April 2013)

Primary Health Networks

Two Key Objectives:

1. Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of health services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes; and
2. Improve coordination of care to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time

Primary Health Networks

To achieve their objectives, PHNs will

1. be “ **aligned** to LHDs and will improve frontline service delivery by working to integrate primary, community and secondary sectors for the benefit of patients.
2. actively **engage** general practitioners, health professionals and the community through local level structures to identify and respond to local health priorities, establish care pathways, and monitor the quality and performance of services.
3. work **collaboratively** with LHDs to reduce hospital admissions and re-admissions”

2014/15 Dept. of Health Portfolio Budget Statement – Outcome Five – Primary Health Care

PHN Characteristics

- Fewer in number than Medicare Locals: economies of scale
- Boundary alignment with LHDs (or clusters of LHDs)
- Clinically focused care integrators: primary, community and acute care
- Clinical Councils: greater role for GPs
- Community Advisory Committees: community voice
- Regional purchasers of services, not providers
- Outcomes focused performance expectations
- Maximising the investment in frontline services

Australian Government Department of Health

Primary Health Networks

Primary Health Network	Local Health Districts
North Coast NSW	Northern NSW & Mid North Coast
Hunter, New England & Central Coast	Hunter New England & Central Coast
Sydney North	Northern Sydney
Central & Eastern Sydney	Sydney & South Eastern Sydney
Western Sydney	Western Sydney
South Western Sydney	South Western Sydney
Nepean Blue Mountains	Nepean Blue Mountains
South Eastern NSW	Illawarra Shoalhaven & Southern NSW
Murrumbidgee	Murrumbidgee
Western NSW	Western NSW & Far West NSW

How to Engage with PHNs

System level work:

- better health outcomes
- better patient experience
- lower cost

Structured engagement:

- Strategic planning and objectives
- Formal and informal structures established
- Needs assessment - using commissioning models

Partnerships in practice:

- primary care capacity and capability building
- shared care planning supported by data integration
- community and consumer engagement
- jointly planned services/program and projects

Want to Know More?

The Department of Health Primary Health Network Website:
http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/primary_health_networks

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