



## **THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP**

Minister for Health  
Minister for Sport

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

4 August 2015

#### **Primary health care reform discussion paper released**

Consistent with the Abbott Government's commitment to reforming primary health care, the government today released an options discussion paper '*Better outcomes for people living Chronic and Complex Health Conditions through Primary Health Care*'.

Minister for Health Sussan Ley said the discussion paper considered possible reform options which would inform the government's development of a healthier Medicare to support people with complex and chronic diseases and keep them out of hospital longer.

Ms Ley said options in the discussion paper included enrolling people to a single provider who would coordinate the multi-disciplinary care the patient received rather than the patient coordinating their care, set chronic disease payments for a defined package of care rather than individual services and international methods of best practice.

"It is essential to review chronic disease health care because the use of Chronic Disease Management Medicare items had grown by almost 17 per cent in 2013-14 compared to the previous year, with over \$587.6 million worth of benefits paid for over 5.6 million services," Ms Ley said.

"We are committed to finding better ways to care for people with chronic and complex conditions and ensure they receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

"This discussion is a real opportunity to cater for the increase in chronic and complex conditions and this approach ensures that health professionals and patients continue to be central to this process."

Ms Ley said the Primary Health Care Advisory Group, led by former AMA President Dr Steve Hambleton, had developed the discussion paper and canvassed a broad range of options to improve effective and appropriate patient-centred primary care.

The Primary Health Care Advisory Group would hold public consultations across Australia over the next month to finalise its recommendations to Government.

"I encourage all Australians including patients, health professionals and interested parties to look at the options included in the discussion paper and provide their feedback as we work hand-in-hand to deliver a primary health care system that better looks after Australians earlier," Ms Ley said.

“This discussion paper sets out a number of suggestions to make Australia’s primary health care a better integrated and holistic system that considers the whole of a patient’s health care needs.

“Importantly, this independent advisory group is being led by clinicians and patient representatives and is conducting this discussion at arm’s length of government.

“I encourage all Australian’s to take part in this discussion and provide their thoughts on our primary care system as we work together to ensure it is providing the best care possible.”

Ms Ley said the Primary Health Care Advisory Group-would seek feedback through an online survey, which will be open from Thursday 6 August until Thursday 3 September, and would conduct public consultations in Sydney, Western Sydney and Dubbo before moving on to Melbourne, Geelong, Hobart, Brisbane, Cairns, Rockhampton, Adelaide, Alice Springs, Darwin, Perth and Broome.

Targeted consultations with groups such as the AMA, RACGP, Indigenous, rural and allied health groups, private health insurance and nursing sectors and consumers would also be held from today.

A nationwide webcast will be hosted on Friday, 21 August with participants able to log in and view the proceedings online.

Following the public consultation, the Primary Health Care Advisory Group will develop specific recommendations for Government by the end of the year.

To access the discussion paper and supporting documents, fill out the consultation survey and to find a consultation near you go to: [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

**ENDS**

**Minister Ley’s Media Contact:** James Murphy – 0478 333 974