

ALLIED HEALTH INDUSTRY REFERENCE GROUP

MEETING FOUR: 13 DECEMBER 2022 - SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

The Allied Health Industry Reference Group (AHIRG) held its fourth meeting on 13 December 2022.

The topics covered in the meeting included:

- A discussion regarding how to increase access to Allied Health Assistants (AHAs). This discussion was led by the Department of Health and Aged Care (the Department) along with representatives from the Allied Health Assistants National Association and Indigenous Allied Health Australia; both organisations provided short presentations on their work and role with AHAs.
- Discussions between AHIRG members highlighted the need for:
 - clarity within the non-public hospital setting on the definition and role of AHAs, such as their scope of practice, supervision requirements, the process of safely delegating and/or allocating tasks to AHAs, and how AHAs are insured when undertaking these activities.
 - more standardised training for AHAs, with allied health professionals consulted on AHA training requirements.
 - AHAs training and education to better align with service delivery settings.
 - better data on the AHAs workforce (e.g. the sector/s they work in, and which allied health professions they support).
 - more information on existing regulation and reporting mechanisms that ensure quality of care.
- The Department led a discussion on establishing a national knowledge sharing forum for allied health clinicians and researchers. This suggestion was first raised at the 1 March 2022 AHIRG meeting. This discussion highlighted the:
 - value in having a national network
 - need to find ways of clearly define its scope and avoiding duplication with existing networks
 - possibility of working with the existing group of Conjoint Allied Health Professors, including on research topics, and
 - merit in developing a complementary national allied health research strategy.
- AHIRG members agreed there is value in setting a workplan for the AHIRG that outlines the dates and some planned topics for each AHIRG meeting, while still leaving flexibility for members to nominate topics closer to each meeting.
- The next AHIRG meeting will be held in March 2023, with topics including allied health students and clinical placements, and a discussion on primary care reform.

NEXT STEPS:

1. The Department will seek information from members on existing:
 - insurance arrangements of AHAs, including AHA students
 - delegation arrangements for AHAs, and
 - regulation and reporting frameworks for AHAs that ensure quality of care.
2. The Department will also work with members to consult allied health professionals on delegating and allocating tasks to AHAs, and AHAs training requirements.
3. The Department will liaise with the Department of Education to discuss allied health stakeholder involvement and consultation in future reviews of AHA training packages.
4. The Department will consult with state and territory Chief Allied Health Officers on the need for a national allied health research strategy.
5. The Department will also work with the Conjoint Allied Health Professors to further develop a proposal for a national knowledge sharing forum.