

Summary of Strengthening Medicare Policies

Support workforces to work at the top of their scope of practice and reduce pressure on health systems

| Plan to Strengthen Medicare | What this will deliver |
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| More immunisations in pharmacies | From 1 January, the Commonwealth will expand the National Immunisation Program to pharmacies. Eligible people will be able to get immunisations on the program at their local pharmacy at no cost. The Australian Government will fund pharmacies \$18.85 per administered vaccine. This reform will increase patient access and affordability, and reduce pressure on general practice. |
| Reforming Opioid Dependence Treatment access | The PBS Opioid Dependence Treatment program will broaden access to treatments in community pharmacies from 1 July 2023. This will give patients looking to end their dependence on opioids another option to access treatment outside GP clinics and hospitals that are already under immense pressure. |
| National Scope of Practice Review | Commencing in late 2023, the National Scope of Practice Review will review barriers and incentives for all health professionals to work to their full scope of practice. This will optimise use of the health workforce across a stretched primary care sector, and improve patient access particularly in rural and remote areas. |

Expand the nursing workforce to improve access to primary care

| Plan to Strengthen Medicare | What this will deliver |
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| Supporting 500 previously registered nurses to return to the health workforce | Commencing in 2023-24, this proposal will attract 500 enrolled nurses and registered nurses back into the primary care workforce. This will increase access to primary care in the community and reduce avoidable hospital admissions. Expanding the health workforce will support our health system to meet the current and future care needs of Australians, both in hospitals and primary care. |
| Increased clinical placements for nurses in primary care | The Commonwealth will support 6,000 placements nursing students in primary care. This funding will go towards the administrative and logistical costs associated with nursing placements across the primary care sector. This is an important investment to increase the number of nurses working in primary care supporting wrap around care for patients, increasing the capacity of practices to provide care in the community. |

After-hours primary care access

| Plan to Strengthen Medicare | What this will deliver |
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| Improving after hours primary care | The Commonwealth will progressively improve access to primary care through new funding to support after hours programs, commencing in 2023-24. Service gaps in regional areas will be addressed, and collaboration across primary care providers will be supported through Primary Health Networks and improvements to Healthdirect. New PHN programs will increase access to primary care services for culturally and linguistically diverse Australians and people experiencing homelessness. This will benefit patients by supporting more timely and cost effective access to care, and improve awareness of available services and pathways to primary care, and reducing demand on emergency departments. |

Introduce MyMedicare to support wrap around care

| Plan to Strengthen Medicare | What this will deliver |
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| MyMedicare | This year, the Commonwealth will introduce MyMedicare, a new voluntary patient registration model to improve continuity of care for all Australians. MyMedicare formalises and strengthens the relationship between a patient and their primary care team. It will provide practices with more comprehensive information about their regular patients and give patients and their care team access to additional funding packages, tailored to their health needs. |
| Wrap around primary care for frequent hospital users | Wrap around primary care will be offered for frequent hospital users to improve access to comprehensive clinical care and support self-management for people with chronic conditions. In 2023-24, this model of care will be designed and implemented to support general practices through a blended funding model linked to MyMedicare to work in primary healthcare teams. This will reduce the burden on stressed hospital emergency departments, while improving patient access, experience and health outcomes. |
| General Practice in Aged Care Incentive | This payment will incentivise general practitioner attendance in residential aged care homes, supporting older Australians to receive continuous quality primary care services. Residents without a regular GP and practice will be matched with one by Primary Health Networks. From 1 August 2024, this incentive will replace the extended GP Aged Care Access Incentive (ACAI). This provides sufficient time for patients to register through MyMedicare to a regular provider or practice, to improve access and quality of care for aged care residents and reduce hospitalisations. |

Flexible funding for multidisciplinary team-based modes of care

| Plan to Strengthen Medicare | What this will deliver |
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| PHN Commissioning of Multidisciplinary teams | The Commonwealth will strengthen the role of PHNs in commissioning allied health and nursing services to improve access to affordable multidisciplinary health care teams, beginning in 2023-24. This measure will improve increase patient access to care in the community, improve the affordability of multidisciplinary health care teams, improve the management of chronic conditions and reduce avoidable hospitalisations in underserved communities. |
| Increase Workforce Incentive Payment | From 2023-24, the Government will increase and index all payments under the Workforce Incentive Program – Practice Stream. This will provide flexible funding for multidisciplinary team-based models to improve quality of care and support treatment of chronic and complex conditions. Making it more affordable for practices to employ or contract a range of health professionals will improve access to high quality and coordinated multidisciplinary primary care. This will facilitate a clinical transition to new models of care that are responsive to community needs, ensuring multidisciplinary team-based care if affordable and accessible to all Australians. |

Investing in digital health to improve health outcomes

| Plan to Strengthen Medicare | What this will deliver |
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| Australian Digital Health Agency | From 30 June 2023, the Government will continue to support the operation of the Australian Digital Health Agency, a statutory authority delivering digital health functions on behalf of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments. It will provide assurance to Government that the skills, resources and capabilities required to drive a more connected health system are available to drive new and emerging priority projects. |
| My Health Record | This Government is extending support for the My Health Record system from 30 June 2023. This measure will also progress new initiatives to support the digital sharing of pathology and diagnostic imaging information across the entire health sector. It marks the beginning of a transition of My Health Record away from a clinical document system to a data-rich platform. This investment will put in place the critical building blocks required to ensure Australians do not need to unnecessarily retell their health story and avoid unnecessary, duplicative procedures and services. |