Allied Health Industry Reference Group

Meeting Six: 7 June 2023 Summary of Outcomes

The Australian Government Chief Allied Health Officer (CAHO) convened the sixth Allied Health Industry Reference Group (AHIRG) meeting on 7 June 2023. Participants joined the meeting in-person or virtually.

Topics discussed:

* Current delegation, insurance, and quality of care guidance for Allied Health Assistants (AHAs)
* Federal Budget Update
  + The department discussed several allied health related items that were announced at the recent 2023-24 Federal Budget. These items respond to the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce report, which was released earlier this year.
  + Members highlighted the need for efficient Government communication and cooperation, given this work will stretch across multiple sectors.
  + Budget initiatives discussed included:
    - The MyMedicare voluntary patient registration system, which will commence on 1 July 2023 for practice registration and 1 October 2023 for patients.
    - The Workforce Incentive Program, which has been expanded to enable additional funding for multidisciplinary care, including allied health.
    - Primary Health Networks multidisciplinary team commissioning to improve access to allied health, nursing and midwifery services.
    - Scope of Practice review to identify barriers which prevent health workers, including allied health, from working to their full scope of practice.
    - Thin Markets funding, to increase access in areas where there is a significant shortage of aged care, disability and primary health care services. Funding will be provided to ten identified locations across multiple sectors, including primary care.
* The department committed to holding an out of session AHIRG session to discuss the impact of allied health work-based learning placements on quality of care and further discussion on AHAs.

Next Steps:

1. The department will seek members’ input on the common pathways for AHAs to move into working as an allied health professional.
2. Pending further discussions with NAHAC, the department will aim to present members with draft principles to guide decisions on delegating activities to AHAs at the July AHIRG meeting.
3. The department will reach out to the Vocational Education and Training sector regarding the timing of, and process for, future reviews of AHA training courses.