



UPDATE FROM LEAD REVIEWER PROFESSOR MARK CORMACK

11 September 2023

Welcome and update

Welcome to *Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce* (Scope of Practice Review). The review was announced in the 2023-24 Federal Budget and forms part of the Australian Government's response to the *Strengthening Medicare Reform Taskforce*.

It is a privilege to be asked by the Minister for Health and Aged Care to lead the review. The Government has foreshadowed a significant program of reforms across the primary health care system and the health and care workforce more broadly. This review covers an important intersection across these two priority areas.

The Scope of Practice Review will identify opportunities to remove barriers preventing health professionals in primary care from working to their full scope of practice. In addition, it will identify examples of where conditions have enabled multi-disciplinary teams to thrive and consistently work at the top of their scope of practice delivering better care.

This review will begin by gathering and analysing the evidence underpinning the benefits, outcomes and risks associated with health professionals working to, or being prevented from delivering on, their full scope of practice in primary care. The benefits, outcomes and risks will be considered from a range of perspectives including consumers, health professionals, employers, funders, higher education providers, colleges, regulators and governments. It will also consider systemic and cultural issues and barriers that restrict the ability of health professions to practice at a level consistent with their skills, training and potential scope, and make recommendations to address them.

Health professions that will be considered in this review include general practitioners, nurses, including nurse practitioners, registered nurses and enrolled nurses, midwives, pharmacists, allied health practitioners (both regulated and self-regulated), First Nations health practitioners and workers, and paramedics. The role of general practitioners will also be considered in the context of specialist medical tasks that could be delivered by general practitioners.

The service requirement for effective contemporary primary care will be considered to identify the clinical tasks that could be delivered by a range of clinicians as part of improving the accessibility and quality of primary care.

Guiding principles for the review are that its recommendations should:

- support innovation that improves access to care which meet community needs in a safe and affordable way for patients and the Australian community
- better use technology to expand scopes of practice, to support greater productivity and improve quality of care
- support health system productivity by encouraging more health professionals to work to the top of their scope of practice, where this is not currently occurring

- identify opportunities to replicate or modify reforms across multiple professions in a consistent way, to support a connected health system, rather than focus on reform through profession specific perspectives.

Read the [Terms of Reference](#) for the Review.

Timeline

The review commenced in late August 2023 and will be complete in December 2024. There are five broad phases to the report. The precise dates for each phase are yet to be set, but the following are indicative at this early stage of the Review.

1. *Establishment, Discovery and Evidence Review (September to mid-November 2023)*. This will include an initial call for submissions (September), literature review, identification of case studies and exemplars, and analysis. Initial stakeholder consultation forums are proposed over a six-week period concluding mid-November.
2. *Release of First Issues Paper (December 2023 to End February 2024)*. The first Issues Paper will summarise and synthesise the full range of inputs from the previous phase including submissions, literature review, case studies and exemplars. Themes for further analysis and testing will be identified as the basis for a second wave of public consultation and input.
3. *Release of Second Issues Paper (March 2024 to end June 2024)*. Issues Paper 2 will examine in detail the barriers and enablers associated with health professionals working to their full scope. It will identify and test a range of potential policy and system reforms, and consider approaches to their scalable, national implementation. A six-week public consultation period on this paper will be undertaken.
4. *Preparation and release of draft Final Report and Implementation Plan (July to Mid-September 2024)*. This phase brings together findings, recommendations and implementation plan for a final round of public consultation which concludes in mid-September.
5. *Final report (Mid-September to end October 2024)*. The Final report will be prepared and finalised for submission to the Minister for Health and Aged Care by end October 2024.

Next steps

The Review team is being established now and the next milestones are:

1. *Call for First Round of Submissions* – Open week commencing 11 September 2023, closing 16 October 2023
2. *Expert Advisory Group* – This will be established and ready to have its first meeting in mid-October 2023
3. *Get involved* – Email scopeofpracticereview@health.gov.au to be added to the review mailing list and receive important news and updates.

I look forward to working with you on *Unleashing the Potential of our Health Workforce*.

Mark Cormack

Lead Reviewer

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