

Meeting of the Expert Advisory Committee, 12 December 2023

Communique

The second meeting of the Expert Advisory Committee (EAC) for the Scope of Practice Review took place by video conference on 12 December 2023.

The meeting was chaired by Professor Cormack and attended by 14 members and 3 proxies of the EAC membership. Two additional observers from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners attended the meeting.

Introduction and opening remarks

The Chair welcomed attendees, acknowledged the traditional owners and custodians of the lands on which the meeting is held, paid respect to elders past, present and emerging and welcomed all First Nations people in attendance.

Members declared no new interests and endorsed with no changes the minutes of the 14 November meeting.

Phase 1 Emerging themes

The Chair indicated that it had been encouraging to observe the level of consensus emerging from the first phase of consultations.

The Chair introduced members to the five key themes that had emerged in relation to the barriers to health practitioners working to their full scope of practice in primary care through the first phase of consultation. These themes form the basis of Issues Paper 1.

1. Funding policy

The mechanism for payment, i.e. fee for service, through the Medical Benefits Schedule (MBS) was frequently raised as an issue impacting on access to multidisciplinary care teams and a significant barrier to health professionals operating at full scope of practice.

He described several examples of different funding and payment mechanisms to the traditional fee for service payment, including those being introduced as part of Strengthening Medicare reforms.

2. Technology

The Chair described how the ability to share information through digital technology in real time is an important enabler for multidisciplinary care teams working to their full scope of practice.

Members raised the need for state based employed professionals having visibility of records, particularly in a rural context, or in certain jurisdictions or professions. They described the potential value of digital technology, such as the My Health Record, in providing patient autonomy.

The universality of access by profession and jurisdiction was also discussed.

3. Employer practices and settings

The Chair provided an overview of the employer practices and settings theme.

Discussion took place on the topics of:

- the interplay between local credentialling and national registration standards
- the lack of harmonisation across states and territories, individual practices and care settings
- the importance of building trust and confidence in the community and in multidisciplinary teams
- clinical governance mechanisms for quality and safety in the primary care sector.

4. Legislation and regulation

Discussion focused on the merits, or otherwise, of endorsements, with a diversity of views presented.

Members also focused on the barriers to working to full scope of practice posed by the state and territory Drugs and Poisons Acts, and the need for harmonisation.

5. Education and training

All participants agreed that trust and confidence in relation to the education and training of health professionals was an important issue for consumers, teams and clinicians. Potential contributors to that confidence included more opportunities for different specialisations and rotations across health care professions through the primary care setting, harmonisation across jurisdictions, and more standardisation of interprofessional learning and training.

Draft issues paper

The Chair presented an overview of the structure of Issues Paper 1, including a summary of the evidence and consultation noting that discussion of emerging themes and questions arising from this would be the subject of further consultation.

Phase 2 consultation approach

Members were provided with an overview of the Phase 2 national consultation program, highlighting:

- the release of Issues Paper 1 and call for submissions on 23 January 2024
- a national roadshow of stakeholder forums across all state and territory capitals through February and early March
- the public consultation survey opening on 23 January.

One member queried how rural and remote communities would be included. It was noted that additional consultations would be held with rural and remote organisations.

Action items

The secretariat will:

- circulate a summary of the second EAC meeting for review and feedback
- develop a communique of the second meeting to be provided on the Review's



website

- open the call for registrations for the national events.
- send information on the next two EAC meetings early in the new year and well in advance of the next two meetings.

Engagement and further information

Organisations and individuals seeking to engage with the review should contact the review team. Further information on the review is also available by emailing:

scopeofpracticereview@health.gov.au.

