



October 2023

Strengthening Medicare Implementation Oversight Committee Meeting 1 Communiqué

The inaugural meeting of the Strengthening Medicare Implementation Oversight Committee (IOC) was held on Monday 30 October 2023 at 2.00pm (AEDT) via videoconference.

The IOC was co-chaired by Ms Celia Street, Acting Deputy Secretary, Primary and Community Care Group and Ms Penny Shakespeare, Deputy Secretary Health Resourcing Group, Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care (the department). Member organisations represented at the meeting are at [Attachment 1](#).

Terms of Reference

Members discussed and endorsed the draft Terms of Reference for the IOC with minor amendments. Co-chairs agreed to consider the frequency and timing of future meetings as required.

Strengthening Medicare – Overview of Reform Measures Announced in 2023-24 Budget

The department provided members with an overview of the Strengthening Medicare package of reforms committed to by the Australian Government to address the priorities identified in the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce Report.

Members discussed the reform measures included in the package of reforms, and it was noted that more detailed information and updates would be provided as the implementation of reform measures ramp up.

Members also discussed the external Governance structure for Strengthening Medicare Implementation. The department committed to reviewing First Nations representation within the Governance arrangements, greater application of an equity lens across the structure, and providing greater visibility of committees and working groups external to this structure established to support stakeholder consultation on individual measures.

Priority Area 1: Increasing Access to Primary Care

The department provided members with an update on progress of implementation of measures underway to address *Priority Area 1: Increasing Access to Primary Care*, including on Medicare Urgent Care Clinics, general practice incentives and bulk billing changes. The progress of implementation of MyMedicare was also discussed, including the challenges of current eligibility criteria and accreditation, barriers for uptake in remote and regional communities and access for priority populations. Members noted the importance of aligning the implementation of measures through the Strengthening Medicare Reforms to the Primary Care 10 Year Plan, the quintuple aim, and a One Health System view.

Priority Area 2: Multidisciplinary Team Care

Professor Mark Cormack, lead reviewer, gave a presentation on the *Unleashing the Potential of Our Health Workforce (Scope of Practice) Review* and led discussion on the parameters for the review. The department also provided an update on the Review of Distribution Levers and activity to support services in thin markets.

Priority Area 3: Modernising Primary Care

The department provided an overview on a range of digital health measures currently in progress, including supporting nationally consistent, standardised ways of sharing health information safely, securely and in real time across a patient's journey through the health system, as well as consultation with states and territories.

Priority Area 4: Supporting Change Management

The department outlined the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and the proposed approach for a baseline study of general practice viability. Members discussed the value, importance and challenges in data collection and agreed to provide further written feedback out-of-session and to hold an additional meeting in early December 2023 to continue discussion.

Next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for early December 2023 to enable further discussion on the proposed Strengthening Medicare Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

Attachment 1:

Member organisations in attendance

Australian Association of Practice Management (AAPM)
Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA)
Australian College of Midwives (ACM)
Australian College of Nurse Practitioners (ACNP)
Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM)
Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA)
Australian Medical Association (AMA)
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF)
Australian Primary Healthcare Nurses Association (APNA)
Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA)
Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM)
Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF)
Department of Health, Tasmania (on behalf of state and territory health jurisdictions)
Department of Health, Victoria (on behalf of state and territory health jurisdictions)
First Nations Representative from Health Consumers Queensland
LGBTIQ+ Health Australia
National Rural Health Commissioner
People with Disability Australia (PWDA)
Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA)
Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)
Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA)
Western Australia Primary Health Alliance (on behalf of Primary Health Networks)

Individual members in attendance

Professor Anthony Scott
Dr Steve Hambleton
Dr Walid Jammal