

Allied Health Industry Reference Group Meeting Summary

Meeting No. 16, Tuesday, 2 December 2025

On 2 December 2025, the Australian Government Chief Allied Health Officer (CAHO), Anita Hobson-Powell chaired the 16th meeting of the Allied Health Industry Reference Group (AHIRG) meeting via Teams.

Agenda item 1: Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

- The CAHO welcomed attendees and advised that the Health Workforce Division would present the first agenda item, to be followed by the CAHO update.

Agenda item 2: Workforce demand mapping workshop

- Health Workforce Division led a discussion on workforce data collection. The discussion focussed on workforce supply data for self-regulated allied health professions and how the department could work with self-regulated allied health professions to share this data. The aim is to create a standard minimum dataset containing the following information: a unique identifier, divisions as applicable, year graduated, hours worked, length of stay in job
- Members discussed:
 - Who would be the custodians of the data and what data governance arrangements will be put in place including if Association Boards will need to sign or agree to data sharing agreements and data collection notices.
 - Data quality and variability differ enormously across the sector due to inconsistency in collection and the workforce systems being used are all different, so data is unreliable
 - The size and maturity of self-regulation organisations also have an impact on the consistency and quality of data captured
 - If a minimum data set is introduced by the Commonwealth, professional associations will have an additional administrative burden of data collection and sharing of data. For the professional associations to agree to this without additional funding they would need to be shown how the data will be shared and used and what the expected outcomes will be from sharing this data. Also, if it will be an ongoing requirement or a time limited one-off collection exercise.
 - Whether the Department could access university data on graduates to understand the number of graduates in the pipeline for the purposes of supply modelling

Agenda item 3: Meeting Business

- The CAHO provided a status update on previous actions:

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- Agenda item 4: PHNs gave MDT project updates at the National Collaborative forum of PHNs and Allied health peaks meeting on 19 November.
- Agenda item 5: A meeting between self-regulated allied health professions and the department was held on 17 November. The group discussed potential methods of capturing non NRAS allied health data, the challenges of developing and capturing accurate information and issues using census data.
- Agenda item 5: Slides for workforce demand mapping and basic workforce modelling methodology were circulated to attendees.
- Agenda item 11: A feedback survey was circulated to attendees following meeting 15

- There were no Conflicts of Interest declared.

Agenda item 4: CAHO update

- Intellectual Health Disability Capability Framework resources
 - A key action under the [Intellectual Disability Roadmap](#) is about improving tertiary education curricula for health students, so that the future health workforce is culturally competent and equipped with the right knowledge and skills to provide high quality care to people with intellectual disability. The [Intellectual Disability Health Capability Framework](#) was developed by the Department to support this action.
 - The Framework sets out clear capabilities, learning outcomes and guides that can be integrated into existing education curricula and accreditation standards for all health disciplines providing health care to people with intellectual disability.
 - Resources are available on the Department's website at [Intellectual Disability Health Capability Framework and education resources | Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing](#)
- The National Allied Health Digital Uplift Plan (Plan)
 - The Plan will be released on 4 December (an email about the release and promotion opportunities was sent via the CAHO inbox out to members on this date). The Plan sets the direction for the allied health sector to connect with Australia's national digital health infrastructure and marks a turning point toward connected care.
- Members discussed:
 - What role they can play to support the uplift of allied health digital capabilities.
 - AHPA has been tasked developing a toolkit using existing resources to build the capacity and capability of allied health in the digital space.
 - A key challenge is that of the approximate 50 clinical systems used by allied health professionals, none are conformant with My Health Record. Cost to smaller practices if required to purchase a system to conform with My Health Record needs to be considered.

Agenda item 5: MBS allied health chronic condition management review update

- Medicare Benefits and Digital Health Division updated the group on the Medial Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review Advisory Committee (MRAC) allied health chronic condition management services review.
 - The MRAC Allied Health working group met for the fifth time on 20 November 2025 and is considering the following 4 questions:
 1. What should the calendar year limit be for individual allied health services?
 2. Should the existing individual allied health service 'floor' of 20 minutes be increased? If so, what is an appropriate 'floor' and should this vary (e.g., longer initial consult or time-tiering)?
 3. Should the existing condition specific restriction on group allied health services be expanded beyond type 2 diabetes? If so, which conditions would benefit from group therapy, and which of the existing eligible individual allied health provider services are appropriate for group therapy?
 4. Should the list of eligible individual allied health providers be expanded? If so, which allied health professions should be added?
 - They considered a qualitative research report which summarised and synthesised the views of peak provider and patient experiences of the MBS allied health chronic condition management items.
 - Draft recommendations in response to questions 3 and 4 were drafted by the working group, on group therapy and eligible allied health providers for individual services. These will be presented to the MRAC on 8 December 2025 for discussion and endorsement. The recommendations will be subject to targeted consultations, to take place likely in late January 2026.
 - The working group is anticipated to reconvene in March 2026 to consider the review evidence base for questions 1 and 2 being finalised by the Sax Institute, along with further findings from the qualitative report.
- The work of the MRAC is expected to complete its work in the second half of 2026
- Members discussed:
 - Whether barriers to use of group therapy items was considered
 - Whether the review is focussing on which professions are eligible or the process for a profession to make the case for eligibility
 - If it was known who can participate in the targeted consultations
 - Plans for the release of evidence reports used by the allied health working group and MBS Reviews Advisory Committee.

Agenda item 6: Introduction and overview of the work of the Office of the National Rural Health Commissioner

- The new Deputy National Rural Health Commissioner - Allied Health introduced themself to the group and provided an overview of the work of the Office of the National Rural Health Commissioner
 - Members discussed:
 - The challenge in the university sector to create rural place-based training opportunities for allied health.
 - Universities may require incentives to support rural allied health place-based programs.

- Practical solutions like selecting students from rural origins, offering extended placements in rural areas, providing ongoing professional and career development and recognising and rewarding advanced/generalist skills and qualifications.

Agenda item 7: Update on Medicare Mental Health Check In

- The Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Division and a representative from St Vincent's Health Australia (SHVA) updated the group on implementation of Medicare Mental Health Check In, previously known as the National Early Intervention Service (NEIS). SVHA has been contracted to deliver Medicare Mental Health Check In.
- The service will provide Low intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (LiCBT) via phone or video. Services will be free and accessible without a diagnosis or referral from a GP.
- The service will be implemented in stages.
 - 1 January 2026 – website will launch providing further information on the service and psychoeducational resources, and people will be able to register their interest for future services.
 - 30 March 2026 – launch of practitioner guided LiCBT services through virtual telehealth appointments
 - 30 May 2026 – launch of self-guided LiCBT services to support people who are able and willing to engage with self-guided resources and tools.
- The service delivery workforce will include a range of allied health professions and nurses, with workers required to hold relevant degrees and registration. SVHA will ensure there is structured onboarding and training for all workers.
- Members discussed:
 - The need for further discussion about the allied health workforce proposed to deliver this service.

Agenda item 8: Overview of today's meeting, confirmation of actions and closing remarks

- Actions arising from this meeting were confirmed
- Members were thanked for their support and input
- Members were invited to request topics for future meetings

Actions Register

Meeting	Action	Responsible Lead	Status
02/12/25	Distribute Allied Health Digital Uplift Plan once released.	AHIRG Secretariat	Complete
02/12/25	First tranche of health workforce modelling (occupational therapists, psychology and radiation) to be shared once it has been through approval process for release through Health Workforce Taskforce and Health Chief Executives Forum and Health Minister's Meeting.	AHIRG Secretariat	Pending
02/12/25	Continue conversation with Council of Deans about data opportunities through longitudinal study, similar to the work that was done for aged care sector nurses.	AHIRG Secretariat	Pending
02/12/25	Circulate the Commonwealth data sharing agreement template, and draft minimum data set examples for member review.	AHIRG Secretariat	Complete
02/12/25	Send links to resources for the Intellectual Health Disability Framework.	AHIRG Secretariat	Complete
02/12/25	Another update on the MRAC review of the MBS allied health chronic disease management services to be provided at the first AHIRG meeting in March 2026.	AHIRG Secretariat	Pending
02/12/25	Connect team from Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Division with AHPA.	AHIRG Secretariat	Complete
02/12/25	Propose meeting dates for 2026.	AHIRG Secretariat	Complete