



Residential Aged Care Quality and Safety (Pillar 3 of the Royal Commission response) – Improving access to primary care and other health services

In response to the Aged Care Royal Commission, the Australian Government will invest \$365.7 million to improve access to primary care for senior Australians, better support their transition between the aged care and health care systems, and improve medication management in residential aged care settings. This will benefit more than 240,000 Australians living in residential aged care.

As part of this measure:

- \$42.8 million to boost the Aged Care Access Incentive from 1 July 2021 to increase face-to-face servicing by general practitioners (GPs) within residential aged care facilities. The maximum yearly payment to be received by GPs will double to \$10,000
 - There are currently more than 5,400 general practitioners who receive the Aged Care Access Incentive
 - The increased maximum yearly payment will provide further incentives to an estimated 1,000 GPs already receiving Aged Care Access Incentive payments to deliver additional services in residential aged care, and
 - It will also attract an estimated 1,100 new GPs to provide a further 120,000 services into residential aged care.
- \$37.3 million in additional funding for the Greater Choice for At Home Palliative Care initiative to expand to all 31 Primary Health Networks, from the 11 Primary Health Networks previously participating in the pilot. This will improve palliative care and end-of-life services within a person's home across the country
- \$178.9 million for Primary Health Networks to utilise their regional expertise and on the ground capabilities to support the health of senior Australians. This will enable:
 - telehealth care for aged care residents
 - enhanced out of hours support for residential aged care
 - dementia pathways to support assessment and referral, and

- early monitoring and identification of health needs to support people to live at home for longer.
- \$23.6 million is being provided to build a better data and evidence base to enable the Government to conduct workforce and other planning to meet the health needs of senior Australians. This includes identifying:
 - the drivers of higher hospitalisation rates for those living in residential aged care
 - the allied health workforce available to meet the care needs of older Australians in home and residential aged care, and
 - models that support the use of multidisciplinary teams to reduce avoidable hospitalisations.
- \$45.4 million to address widespread issues associated with poor medication management in residential aged care, including improving linkages across settings through the use of electronic National Residential Medication Charts and the My Health Record to better support transition of aged care residents across care settings.

Why is this important?

These initiatives will ensure senior Australians are treated with respect, care and dignity as they move across the aged care and health systems. They are a critical step in addressing the Aged Care Royal Commission's findings that coordination and integration with the medical care sector is important to meet the needs of older people.

Greater access to GPs in residential aged care is a critical step to facilitate better access to health services. Additional investment will better incentivise and reward general practitioners for their critical role in delivering long-term support and care to improve the health of senior Australians.

Primary Health Networks will for the first time be provided dedicated funding to commission programs to support senior Australians as well as improving public awareness of aged care and planning for ageing and aged care needs.

The introduction of electronic National Residential Medication Charts is expected to result in a reduction in the number of unnecessary medicines prescribed and dispensed per resident in aged care and will reduce adverse medication incidents.

Better data and evidence will enable the Government to conduct workforce planning and develop models that support the use of multidisciplinary teams to meet the health needs of senior Australians.

These measures implement in full or part *Recommendations 15, 26, 56, 58, 61, 63, 66, 67, 68 and 69* of the Royal Commission's final report.

Who will benefit?

Up to 1.3 million Australians who may access aged care, health and disability services in parallel will benefit from coordinated access to care. GPs will also be supported to provide additional services in residential aged care facilities.

People living in residential aged care will experience improved medication management and reduced adverse medication incidents through the adoption of electronic National Residential Medication Charts. These systems will also reduce the administrative burden for prescribers, pharmacists, nurses and aged care staff.

How much will this cost?

The Australian Government is investing \$365.7 million over 4 years, from 2021–22.