Strengthening Medicare Taskforce

Communiqué

The Australian Government established the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce to identify the highest priority reforms in primary care, backed by the $750 million Strengthening Medicare Fund.

Today, the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce held its second meeting, located on the traditional country of the Kaurna people. Members came together to consider the benefits of voluntary patient registration to improving the health of Australians.

The Taskforce discussed international research and evaluations demonstrating that a stable, sustained relationship between patients and their General Practitioner and practice can lead to higher quality care, improvements in preventative health, increased patient satisfaction, decreases in emergency department attendance and hospitalisations, and reductions in mortality.

It was recognised that voluntary patient registration provided a foundation for ensuring any additional funding for primary care would strengthen patient outcomes and could be targeted to achieve greater equity across Australia.

The Taskforce also heard from the Primary Care Business Council, which delivered a presentation to members on the challenges and opportunities in relation to the business operations of general practice from the perspective of some of Australia's largest corporate providers. Discussion focused on the opportunity for voluntary patient registration to contribute to stabilise and sustain general practice business models of all forms and in all locations across Australia, particularly in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas.

The Taskforce reiterated its focus on affordability and quality of care to all Australians, and to consider concrete recommendations to maximise patient outcomes while optimising the sustainability of general practice at a future meeting.

The Taskforce will next meet in September to consider opportunities to modernise general practice through technology and data reform.

Chair

The Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Mark Butler MP

26 August 2022

Adelaide