



Strengthening Medicare Taskforce

Meeting 3 Communiqué

I have established the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce to provide the highest priority investments in primary care by the end of 2022.

The Strengthening Medicare Taskforce held its third meeting on the traditional country of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

Members came together to consider opportunities to modernise primary care and improve patient outcomes through digital and data reform.

The Strengthening Medicare Taskforce agreed that reform was required to meet consumer expectations about their primary health experience and support healthcare professionals to provide seamless quality care. A first step is improving access to an individual's health information by their primary health care team, wherever it originates in the health system, and for it to be shared with their consent. With 23 million Australians having a My Health Record, the Taskforce discussed that it was now the job of the health sector and governments to ensure that our health data systems need to work better together to ensure people do not need to unnecessarily retell their story or undergo duplicative procedures.

The Strengthening Medicare Taskforce acknowledged the immense contribution of the primary care sector through the COVID-19 pandemic and noted accelerated advances in technological adoption over that time, including e-prescribing and services provided through Healthdirect and telehealth. They agreed that carefully designed data and digital reform can be a significant support to primary care providers and enable better continuity of patient care, and quality and safety in health care.

To sustain this momentum, the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce discussed opportunities to improve functionality and connectivity of patient information across information systems, and lift the capability to use data to improve patient care by primary care and healthcare professionals. At a system level, there are opportunities to use data to improve the journey of a patient across the health system and plan for the future health needs of Australians. Progress on data and digital reform will depend on maintaining trust that systems are built to protect personal information.

The Strengthening Medicare Taskforce will next meet in early November to discuss opportunities in multidisciplinary care and in harnessing the full skills of the primary care sector.

Chair

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

29 September 2022

Melbourne