



Strengthening Medicare Taskforce

Meeting 4 Communiqué

The Strengthening Medicare Taskforce held its fourth meeting on the traditional country of the Kaurna People in Adelaide today.

Taskforce members came together to consider opportunities to meet the healthcare needs of the Australian population by increasing access to multidisciplinary team-based care in primary health and addressing barriers preventing healthcare professionals from working to their full scope of practice.

To support the discussion, representatives from the Australian Psychological Society gave a presentation on some of the current challenges and opportunities in delivering multidisciplinary care to achieve the best outcomes for people experiencing mental health concerns.

Taskforce members agreed that multidisciplinary team-based care models have a range of benefits including improved patient outcomes, prevention of disease, cost-effective and value-based care across the health system, greater use of the available workforce addressing shortages, reduced patient wait times, and improved attraction and retention of health professionals through rewarding career paths and job satisfaction. These benefits are achieved through collaboration in accessing the wide range of strengths and skills of the diverse health workforce to integrate and coordinate care that meets patients' needs.

Taskforce members discussed barriers to the provision of multidisciplinary team-based care to patients in the primary care setting, including siloed funding arrangements, legislative and regulatory restrictions, and the need for cultural change to support healthcare professionals working across their full scope of practice.

To achieve successful implementation of multidisciplinary team-based care, the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce discussed opportunities for reforms in the primary care sector, supported through changes in funding models, improved coordination and collaboration across primary healthcare, changes in education and training to ensure workers have the skills required for this model of working, and enabling digital and data sharing reforms.

The Strengthening Medicare Taskforce will next meet in late November to discuss primary care funding models and sustainability of primary care businesses.

Chair

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

4 November 2022

Adelaide