

MEDIA RELEASE



Report signals new era of collaboration between primary care and hospital sectors

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Health system efficiencies, better outcomes for patients and the pivotal role of general practice in transforming our health system are some of the key takeaways from the State Government's Sustainable Health Review, whose final report was released today.

WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) is pleased to have had the opportunity to play a key role in representing the voice of the primary care sector throughout the review and will continue to do so as part of a newly agreed strategic partnership with the Department of Health, WA.

The partnership is intended to enable the joint planning, priority setting and funding of coordinated care, giving priority to the delivery of patient-centred, high quality and financially sustainable healthcare across WA.

WAPHA CEO Learne Durrington said the Review made it clear that our health system is under stress and there is a perception that hospital care is always best. There is also a disconnect between general practice and hospitals, and complex funding structures add to the issues experienced by clinicians and patients.

"The Review acknowledges these shortcomings and confirms the critical role that primary care can and should play, in particular general practice, in transforming our health system.

"It also presents a once in a lifetime opportunity to develop a new way of working, with a focus on what is best for the patient with more care delivered close to home when appropriate.

"This might include a shared approach to care, particularly for people with more complex, chronic conditions, with the GP, allied health professional and specialist working together with the patient to keep on top of their condition and reduce the need for hospital care.

"WAPHA will now, in partnership with WA Health, assist in the development of the 10-year State Health Plan and the delivery of a bi-annual Primary Health Roundtable. This ensures a regular opportunity for GPs, allied health professionals and primary care service providers to continue the conversation that's been started," Ms Durrington said.

Other benefits expected to flow from this new era of collaboration include improved communication, relationships and coordination between primary care clinicians, mainly GPs, and hospital-based specialists, more capacity building in primary care, and delivering certain low complexity specialist services out of hospital, in partnership with primary care.

For more information or to read the Sustainable Health Review Final Report, visit <http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/sustainablehealthreview>

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About WA Primary Health Alliance: WA Primary Health Alliance oversees the strategic commissioning functions of the Perth North, Perth South and Country WA Primary Health Networks (PHNs). The WA PHNs are three of 31 PHNs established by the Australian Government nationally to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for the community. We work across the WA healthcare system with doctors, allied health professionals, hospitals and service providers to improve the coordination of care for people who are at risk of poor health outcomes. For more information, visit www.wapha.org.au