

# Primary Health Networks and NPS MedicineWise

NPS MedicineWise and Primary Health Networks (PHNs) are Commonwealth funded organisations with specific individual responsibilities.

PHNs have been charged with developing and supporting evidence-based health pathways, capacity development in general practice, and data collection and analysis to inform the planning and provision of health services.

PHNs provide the opportunity for strong Commonwealth leadership to establish primary health care as the cornerstone of an innovative, responsive and strong health system.

NPS MedicineWise leads national work on better use of medicines.

While NPS MedicineWise has entered into bilateral arrangements with some PHNs, these are of limited scope.

National coordination by the Department of Health is needed to address the lack of a shared policy agenda and duplication of effort, and to ensure consistency and collaboration in working with general practice at regional levels.

## AHHA POSITION:

- ✧ Working arrangements between NPS MedicineWise and PHNs should be nationally-coordinated via the Department of Health to ensure policy coherence and a coordinated approach to program delivery. This should include consideration of roles and responsibilities for regional delivery of education and communications programs to general practice, data development, collection and access, and associated costs.
- ✧ PHNs have the key role as regional coordinators and commissioners of primary health services, including capacity development in general practice and assessment of regional health needs to determine health priorities.
- ✧ NPS MedicineWise works with consumers and health professionals to improve the way medicines and medical tests are used, including via education programs delivered to general practice.
- ✧ This work should be conducted in formal partnership with PHNs at regional level, based on a shared policy agenda, and coordinated by the Department of Health. Regular briefings should be provided to PHNs.
- ✧ Best practice data governance is based on the principle of 'collect once, use many times'. Multiple agencies collecting data from general practice is an inefficient approach, and does not engender positive relationships. The PHNs should have a role in regional primary health data governance.
- ✧ Data currently collected by NPS MedicineWise on prescribing patterns has value for regional health needs assessments but is not readily accessible and should be customised to align with PHN priorities. Data development, access and costs should be determined with due consideration to the Commonwealth's health policy agenda and funding for this work.
- ✧ Insufficient and uncoordinated primary care services inevitably lead to increased demand on acute hospitals through outpatient clinics, emergency departments and hospital admissions.

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