

Private Health Insurers and Primary Care

Around 50% of Australians hold private health insurance, and the Commonwealth Government has indicated support for greater involvement of private health insurers in primary care.

A number of trial projects were initiated by private health insurers in 2014, and it is likely that there will be further development of this work in the future.

The effective and efficient funding, provision and coordination of primary health care services is critical for a sustainable health system which aims to improve health outcomes and reduce overall health care costs.

However, any involvement of private health insurers in primary care must not be to the detriment of those who do not have private insurance, and the Commonwealth Government must ensure that non-insured patients have equal access to primary care.

AHHA POSITION:

- ✧ Innovation in the delivery of primary healthcare services is welcomed.
- ✧ Initiatives that promote prevention and early intervention and improve the coordination of care should be encouraged.
- ✧ The Government must clearly define its expectations of the role of private health insurers in primary care.
- ✧ An increased role for private health insurers in primary care must neither reduce access nor increase costs for non-insured consumers.
- ✧ Open and transparent evaluation of private health insurer initiatives is essential and must be publicly released to inform debate.
- ✧ The evaluation of private health insurer initiatives and the primary healthcare system overall would be greatly enhanced by the availability of patient based data. The Commonwealth Government must address this as a priority.