

30 January 2019

Anthony Beasley
Secretary to the Committee
Select Committee on Health Services in South Australia
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Adelaide SA 5000

Dear Secretary to the Committee,

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission as part of the Legislative Council's inquiry on health services in South Australia.

AHHA is Australia's national peak body for public hospitals and healthcare providers. Our membership includes state health departments, Local Hospital Networks (LHNs) and public hospitals, community health services, Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and primary healthcare providers, aged care providers, universities, individual health professionals and academics. As such, we are uniquely placed to be an independent, national voice for universal high-quality healthcare to benefit the whole community.

To achieve a healthy Australia supported by the best possible healthcare system, AHHA recommends Australia reorientate the healthcare system over the next 10 years by enabling outcomes-focused and value-based healthcare. This requires:

1. A nationally unified and regionally controlled health system that puts patients at the centre;
2. Performance information and reporting that is fit for purpose;
3. A health workforce that exists to serve and meet population health needs;
4. Funding that is sustainable and appropriate to support a high quality health system.

AHHA's *Healthy people, healthy systems* is a blueprint with a series of short, medium and long-term actions to achieve this goal. I have attached a copy of *Healthy people, healthy systems* along with this submission, and it is also available online at www.ahha.asn.au/Blueprint.

AHHA submits the following with regards to:

- a) *The opportunity to improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of health services including through an increased focus on preventive health and primary care;*
- c) *The Federal Government's funding of State Government services and the linking of other federally funded services in South Australia, such as Medicare funded GP services, and Adelaide Primary Health Network and Country Primary Health Network;*
- d) *Any related matters.*

Primary healthcare services cover health promotion, prevention, early intervention and treatment of both acute and chronic conditions. Services are often delivered in general practices but also in other settings including community health centres, allied health and dental practices, pharmacies and Aboriginal Medical Services

The provision of healthcare in Australia is largely both fragmented and episodic. This is caused by a lack of coordination and accountability across healthcare providers and parts of the healthcare system, in addition to a short-term focus on meeting health needs. Funding models also contribute to this sub-optimal approach to providing healthcare.

Integrated care requires a perspective across the continuum of care from preventive care to community, primary, acute, disability and aged care.

The delivery of integrated care must be tailored to local community needs and local system capacity. This means that models of integrated care will vary across Australia. All tiers of government must work cooperatively to achieve integrated care. The different systems in the continuum of care must also work cooperatively to maximise patient outcomes and whole of system efficiencies.

AHHA recommends that agreements between the Commonwealth and PHNs and states and territories with LHNs must be formalised and operationalised at regional level through PHNs and LHNs to:

- Establish consistent governance arrangements for regional needs assessments, priority setting and pooling of funds;
- Coordinate and integrate approaches to reducing preventable hospital admissions and presentations;
- Address health and social inequalities, making better use of data and technology, promoting better engagement between service providers and patients, and improving transitions of care.

Preventive health measures improve health system resource use, enhance economic performance through greater workforce participation and productivity, and are a low-cost way of reducing future budgetary pressures.

With the Commonwealth, state and territory governments facing continued budgetary pressure from rising health costs, an effective way to address future budgetary pressures is to take earlier steps to prevent health conditions from occurring, delaying the onset, reducing the severity and preventing comorbidity.

AHHA recommends that sustained investment in preventive health programs is needed. This will require:

- regional needs assessments determining projected population need over 5–10 years;
- a commitment to providing better access to preventive health programs that are culturally safe, effective, accessible and of high-quality. Programs should be informed by evidence, local and international experience, and co-designed with community partners. Strategies should include population-wide and targeted approaches, addressing issues specific to vulnerable populations and regional need;
- preventive health measures should take into account the social determinants of health, and require partnerships and engagement with community and social service providers;
- a commitment to improving consumer health literacy;
- a commitment to early detection and targeted secondary prevention;
- establishment of long-term research projects to understand the impact of preventive healthcare and its ability to achieve better health outcomes (including cost effectiveness);
- comprehensive and coherent policies that share responsibility across all levels of government, industry and community.

Funding for preventive health should initially target a return to 2.3% of recurrent expenditure on health.

Priority areas of focus in preventive health should include:

- inequality;
- overweight and obesity;
- alcohol misuse and abuse;
- tobacco control;
- immunisation.

Finally, AHHA recommends the government of South Australia proactively engages with both South Australian PHNs, particularly as the state government reviews its health services and subsequently recommends and implements reforms to improve health system integration and to enhance preventive and primary healthcare.

Sincerely,



Alison Verhoeven
Chief Executive
Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association

Attachment: *Healthy people, healthy systems*