

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) welcomes the Federal Government's actions to improve access to primary care in the 2023-24 budget.

'Last night's budget announcement had a particular focus on improving primary care access for our underserved and vulnerable populations,' says AHHA Chief Executive Kylie Woolcock.

'This includes funding to address the decline in GP bulk billing of people on low incomes, improving access to after-hours care and programs to support people experiencing homelessness, as well as funding to establish a Primary Health Network (PHN) Multicultural Access program, to help support multicultural communities in accessing primary care.

'The budget conveys recognition that fee-for-service payment models are not appropriate to manage many of the conditions these populations have, which often need to be supported by integrated, multi-disciplinary care.'

Through a number of budget measures, the Government will begin to establish alternate funding models that will support new models of care that can drive improved outcomes for people and communities, not just more activity.

In general practices, the Workforce Incentive Program will support practices to expand multidisciplinary teams and employ more nurses, allied health and other health professionals in practices.

Primary Health Networks (PHNs) will then be able to focus their efforts on commissioning allied health services that target people with chronic conditions in under-served communities.

'These alternate funding mechanisms will help to introduce better access to quality, multi-disciplinary care into the Australian healthcare landscape, a key component to addressing our evolving healthcare needs and improving outcomes that matter to patients.'

'It is good to see dedicated funding for implementation, monitoring and evaluation in the budget, as this is vital if primary care reforms are to be effective at the population level.'

AHHA also acknowledges the continued Investment into aged care services, which is important for taking pressure off other areas of the health system.

The online version of this [media release](#) on the AHHA website.

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) is the independent peak membership body and advocate for the Australian healthcare system and a national voice for universally accessible, high-quality healthcare in Australia.

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