

GREEN LIGHT FOR GIPPSLAND'S MEDICARE LOCAL

9 November 2011

Dear Members

The Federal Government has announced that the Gippsland Medicare Local will begin operation from July next year.

It is one of 20 Medicare Locals across the nation that will start in July, and in all 38 will begin operation in 2012.

It is good news that the model developed and put forward with broad agreement from many interested parties right across Gippsland has been accepted.

A considerable amount of work has already been undertaken which has led to the formation of the Gippsland Medicare Local Formation Committee. This group includes board members from each of the three Gippsland divisions of general practice and members from the Gippsland Primary Care Health Reform Interest Group who represent primary, acute and aboriginal health services and local government. The role of the committee will be to drive the next stages leading to formation of the Gippsland Medicare Local from July 2012.

What will the formation of a Medicare Local mean for Gippsland?

Formation of the Gippsland Medicare Local signals a major change in decision making and funding processes for primary health care services delivered in Gippsland.

The Gippsland Medicare Local will be responsible for coordinating the identification and prioritisation of health care needs for Gippsland communities. It will then plan, coordinate, fund and oversee the implementation of services, other than public hospital services, across the region. The task of navigating various parts of the health system has been quite complex, which is the last thing people need when they are unwell. The aim of the Gippsland Medicare Local is to make it easier for patients to access the services they need, when and where they need them.

Examples include improving access to after hours GPs, local programs to combat obesity, diabetes support services, and referrals to local specialist services, including mental health.

With all arms of the primary health care sector working together – from GPs, nurses, allied health professionals, and state and local government to Indigenous health organisations and local hospital networks – the Gippsland Medicare Local will be able to better coordinate services and provide a more responsive, targeted and efficient service for patients.

Now that formal approval has been given and a start date designated, the Formation Committee will increase its industry and community engagement activities to encourage appropriate participation.

How can people become part of the Gippsland Medicare Local?

Central to the application to form a Gippsland Medicare Local is the establishment of General Practice Chapters and Sub Regional Advisory committees that will feed into a single Strategic Advisory Committee and then to the Board.

The function of the General Practice Chapters will be to provide a network for information sharing among Gippsland General Practices and people working in General Practice, including GPs, practice nurses, practice managers, allied health staff and mental health nurses. It will also provide a platform for ongoing education, benchmarking, continuous improvement and data-sharing.

Membership of the Sub Regional Advisory Committees may vary from sub-region to sub-region. To be responsive to local issues and provide a strong community voice, membership may include private allied health, general practice, community health, Indigenous health and possibly from relevant general community members.

More detail on how interested people can become involved in either the General Practice Chapters and Sub Regional Committees will be available soon.

For those of you with further questions about the Gippsland Medicare Local, please email me mbogart@cwgdogp.com.au or contact the Division office on 03 5126 2899.

For the latest Federal Government health reform details visit the [Your Health](#) website.

Yours sincerely

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