



Primary Source Mental Health

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From the Principal Network Adviser

From a mental health perspective, a number of events have happened recently that have provided Medicare Locals with the opportunity of understanding and informing the new Co-ordinated Care Measure. The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Mark Butler attended the latest face-to-face meeting of AGPN's leadership group as well as senior officials from the Department of Health and Ageing.

On Friday 26 August, the Department of Health and Ageing met with Tranche 1 Medicare Locals to discuss the Mental Health programs and initiatives being rolled out in Medicare Locals. This included the new Co-ordinated Care measure as well as ATAPS and Flexible Care packages. The Co-ordinated Care measure is designed to co-ordinate services both clinical and non-clinical for people who have a severe and persistent mental illness and complex needs. This new initiative will go out to tender most likely early in the new year and consortium approaches will be encouraged. The Government's view is that for this Measure to be effective it will need strong and robust partnerships between primary care, state funded mental health services and the social care sector.

To provide further input and feedback on the **Co-ordinated Care Measure**, AGPN hosted a workshop for representatives from Tranche 1 Medicare Locals, professional associations and the social care sector (including consumers and carers) on Wednesday 21 September at Parliament House in Canberra. The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Mark Butler attended the workshop at the end of the day to hear the outcomes. DoHA and FaHCSIA were also in attendance. A report outlining the outcomes of the workshop and suggested ways forward will be provided to DoHA and available on the AGPN website shortly. In the meantime, if you want further information, contact me at jparham@agpn.com.au

AGPN and the Australian Psychological Society [APS] have been jointly funded to develop a **clinical governance framework for ATAPS** and to provide purchasing guidance for Medicare Locals on evidence based treatment for people with serious mental illness and for children. This 12 month project commenced in July. Craig Hodges has commenced work for AGPN as the Project Manager for this project. Craig is well credentialed having developed the clinical governance framework for the very first *headspace* sites and over the past 3 years for **headstrong** in



Registrations open now

[AGPN National Forum 2011](#)

[Forum program](#)

Ireland. Craig who has also previously worked for *beyondblue*, is a social worker by profession and has a strong background in youth mental health and the primary care setting. For further information about this project , contact Craig at chodges@agpn.com.au

Another sign the Federal Government is determined to get on top of its mental health agenda is the appointment of the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing Mark Butler as **Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Mental Health** reform.

On the **health reform front**, the Department of Health and Ageing has a new publication out called [National Health Reform: progress and delivery](#). It's also available at the [yourHealth](#) website.

As you can see, there is a lot happening in the primary care and mental health space.

I hope you find this newsletter informative and if you know of others who may wish to subscribe send them to **AGPN's website** <http://www.agpn.com.au/media/subscribe>

You can now follow **AGPN on twitter**: www.twitter.com/agpn_ceo

Jennie Parham, AGPN Principal Network Adviser, Mental Health

Senate inquiry into Mental Health Services

Cuts to the *Better Access Program* announced in the 2011-12 Federal Budget will dilute access and potentially increase costs for patients needing a Mental Health Treatment Plan, was AGPN's central message to the **Senate Community Affairs References Committee inquiry** [\[transcript\]](#) into Commonwealth funding and administration of Mental Health Services.

AGPN's CEO Leanne Wells told the Committee that AGPN believes the decision to reduce the rebates to GPs to undertake vital care planning and coordination role weakens over ten years of activity to build a strong primary mental health care system.

"The impact this policy will have on access to **headspace** and services under the Access to Allied Psychological Services [ATAPS] Program, are likely to be significant and contrary to the Government's aim to expand these areas," Ms Wells said.

[AGPN's submission](#) highlighted the important role GPs play in coordinating all dimensions of a person's care out of hospital. AGPN's evidence also highlighted ATAPS as an important flagship program that is essential to complementing MBS funded psychological services, and the importance of the primary health and social care sectors working together to implement new coordinated care initiatives announced in the Federal Budget.

World Mental Health Week

The Great Push: Investing in Mental Health is the World Federation for Mental Health's theme for this year's campaign. As Australia's new system for primary health care transitions to Medicare Locals, communities will

increasingly see a better investment in mental health services to provide continued and integrated care at the primary care level and particularly for those dealing with mental health issues.

Backing up this world wide campaign is the Mental Health Council of Australia which is running a [Change Your Mind](#) program with resources for **World Mental Health Day 10 October**.

The Council's Director of Communications, Simon Tatz said their key message for the day will be to remind people about the importance of seeking help and getting interventions started sooner rather than later.

"We want this campaign not only to target the at-risk groups but to also prompt family and friends to get the same message for someone close to them who may need help," Mr Tatz said.

e-mental health expert committee established

Australians living with mental illness are a step closer to being able to access online care and support following the establishment of a [new e-mental health expert committee](#) which will advise on the rollout of the nation's first mental health online portal and virtual clinic.

The Federal Minister for Mental Health and Ageing Mark Butler said the rollout of these new online initiatives will be considered by the expert committee in its development of Australia's first national e-mental health strategy.

"Continuing advances in technology are revolutionising the way we provide health care, in particular for patients with chronic illnesses and conditions, such as mental illness," the Minister said.

"Online mental health services provide an alternative form of support or care for people who don't want to, or don't feel comfortable accessing traditional face-to-face services," he said.

"Online services have the potential to overcome geographical, attitudinal and financial barriers which we know that young Australians or people living in remote or regional areas often face," the Minister said.

Mind the Gap workshop delivery: Expressions of Interest invited

AGPN is seeking Expressions of Interest [EOI] to deliver a six hour Mind the Gap workshop through the Network.

Please visit www.agpn.com.au/programs/mindthegap for the EOI Guidelines and application form, and submit applications to cvickers@agpn.com.au

Funding has been received from the Department of Veterans' Affairs to develop and implement a physical and mental health comorbidities education package. This project follows the success of the previously run two hour Mind the Gap training module, delivered through the network in 2009-10. The face to face delivery of the six hour ALM workshop is to be rolled out nationally through the General Practice Network /Medicate Locals commencing October 2011 and completed by 31 March 2012.

The six hour workshop will involve an interactive, structured learning format with predisposing and reinforcing elements, and will involve evaluation activity.

It is structured in a flexible delivery format which can be facilitated over three sessions, or in a single day. The

target audience for the package includes general practitioners, practice nurses, and other primary health care professionals involved in the multidisciplinary team managing patients with mental and physical health co-morbidities.

The education and training package has been accredited for RACGP QI&CPD, ACRRM PDP and GPMHSC Mental Health Skills Training, as well as endorsement from the Royal College of Nursing Australia [RCNA] and Australian Practice Nurse Association [APNA].

For additional information please visit www.agpn.com.au/programs/mindthegap or contact Carol Vickers on (02) 6228 0823 or cvickers@agpn.com.au

Conferences

Australian Psychological Society Annual Conference: 4-8 October 2011, Convention Centre, Canberra

www.apsconference.com.au

Australian Rural and Remote Mental Health Conference: [3rd Australian Rural & Remote Mental Health Symposium](#) Impacts & Outcomes Mercure, Ballarat 14 – 16 November 2011.

Carers Week - October

[Carers Australia](#) and Carers Associations invite all Australians to be part of [Carers Week 2011](#).

Carers Week is Australia's annual celebration of carers and this year will run from Sunday **16 October to Saturday 22 October**. Carers Week 2011 aims to raise awareness of carers, the caring role and relationships, and carer supports and services.

Many great events will be conducted across the nation during Carers Week, including morning teas, launches, exhibitions, seminars and media talkback.

A carer is a person who provides unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness or who are frail aged.

Carers Australia collaborates with the Carers Associations in each state and territory to represent the interests of carers and to deliver supports and services for carers in Australia.

GP's role in providing mental health services

The [Medical Journal of Australia](#) has published its latest findings on the GP's role in providing mental health services to Australians between 1997 and 2007. If you don't have a login for the MJA you will have to register.

Position vacant: Mental Health Program Co-ordinator

Due to an internal promotion, the Melbourne East General Practice Network (MEGPN) is offering an exciting opportunity for a dedicated person with experience in coordinating mental health programs within the primary

health sector. You will coordinate our existing mental health programs & formulate new and innovative approaches to mental health services in our local catchment. Melbourne East GP Network is proudly transitioning to become the 'Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local', as one of the first selected Victorian Medicare Locals. We seek an energetic, innovative and experienced person with excellent communication skills to:

- Coordinate the Access to Allied Psychological Services project;
- Coordinate the Mental Health Nurses Incentive Program ;
- Support and build the capacity of general practice to provide quality mental health care services.

We provide a family friendly work environment and excellent salary packaging.

For more information, please see the 'about us' tab - 'employment' on www.megpn.com.au or contact Sharon Hallett HR Officer at recruitment@megpn.com.au for position description details. To apply please go to www.ApplyNow.com.au/Job28340

Nominations now CLOSED for HESTA PHC Awards

AGPN and HESTA wish to thank the many individuals and organisations that participated in nominating colleagues for the [HESTA Primary Health Care Awards](#) for 2011 and look forward to promoting the finalists very soon.

HESTA in conjunction with AGPN created these awards to mark excellence in primary health care.

ME Bank has provided \$30,000 in prize money for the awards

Finalists will be flown to the:

**HESTA Primary Health Care awards dinner at AGPN's National Forum on
Wednesday 16 November,**



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