



# Aged Care General Practitioner (GP) Panels Initiative Fact Sheet for GPs – June 2004

## General

The Medicare Aged Care General Practitioner (GP) Panels Initiative aims to ensure better access to primary medical care for residents of aged care homes and to enable GPs to work with homes on quality improvement strategies for the care of all residents. The Initiative will be funded from **1 July 2004**.

This Initiative applies to aged care homes subsidised by the Australian Government including both high and low care facilities and multi-purpose services.

For the purposes of the Initiative, the term Panel is used to describe a list, or group, of GPs who agree to undertake particular activities which have been identified as priorities for aged care homes in that Division. The work of GPs participating in the Panel arrangements should complement and build on successful activities already being undertaken in aged care homes in the Division, or assist with the development of new activities.

The GP Panels Initiative encompasses two distinct and separate funding streams to support the establishment of local Panels. These are:

- Funding for GPs for Panel activities
- Funding for the Divisions network for their role in establishing, managing and supporting the Panels and working with aged care homes.

## Role of GPs

GPs who participate in the Panel arrangements will continue to have access to Medicare items for any services provided directly to residents. In addition, funding under the Initiative will be provided to GPs who agree to work with aged

care homes on specific activities. Divisions will work collaboratively with GPs and aged care homes to identify specific activities for the Panel GPs to undertake. These might include:

- addressing issues of resident access to GPs, including for residents without a usual GP or whose usual GP is unable to provide care
- participating in aged care homes' quality improvement activities
- participating in preventive health activities such as immunisation and falls prevention
- sourcing or adapting protocols that assist in improving medical care for residents and streamlining GP activities
- developing strategies to address barriers to primary care service provision.

GPs do not need to be a member of a Division to participate in the Panel arrangements, although Divisions will administer payments to GPs for Panel activities. Divisions will also work with aged care homes to identify existing GP service arrangements and appoint GPs to Panels.

GPs who provide care to residents of homes in other Divisions may negotiate with those Divisions to participate in their Panel arrangements.

GPs who are interested in participating in the Panel arrangements should contact the relevant Division to find out how to apply.

## Role of Divisions

Divisions will be funded from **1 July 2004** to work closely with GPs and aged care homes to assist in the development and implementation of local Panel arrangements. Divisions will provide support and administer payments to Panel GPs.

# Strengthening

# Medicare

The activities undertaken by Divisions include:

- working closely with GPs and aged care homes to identify current service delivery arrangements (including those GPs already providing services), service delivery gaps and pressures
- working closely with GPs and aged care homes to identify priority activities that can be undertaken by GPs participating in the Panel arrangements
- establishing and managing contractual arrangements with GPs
- sharing resources with GPs and aged care homes, including information on work being undertaken in other Divisions to implement the Initiative.

## Role of Aged Care Homes

This Initiative will provide homes with the opportunity to work with GPs and Divisions to develop flexible solutions to improve access to quality medical care for their residents, and support and advice for their staff.

Participating aged care homes will work with participating GPs and Divisions to identify current service delivery arrangements, service delivery gaps and pressures and to agree on appropriate Panel arrangements and activities.

Many aged care homes will already be undertaking quality improvement activities: this initiative will provide GPs with an opportunity to provide input to those quality improvement activities where this is appropriate.

Where homes have not already established such improvement activities or are still in the early stages, participating GPs may, with support from

their local Division, work with aged care homes to assist them to become more involved in these activities.

It is anticipated that most aged care homes will want to participate. Participation in the Initiative by the home should assist in ongoing care delivery and the home's operation.

GPs and Divisions will need to work in close partnership with aged care homes if the potential value of the Initiative is to be realised. To do this, GPs and Divisions will need to engage positively with the residential aged care sector as well as individual aged care homes.

## Further information

For further information please contact:

### Australian Divisions of General Practice:

(02) 6228 0821

### State/Territory Divisions' Liaison Officers:

NSW	(02) 9263 3564
QLD	(07) 3360 2956
VIC	(03) 9665 8906
TAS	(03) 6221 1500
NT	(08) 8946 3435
SA	(08) 8237 8319
WA	(08) 9346 5430

For more information call **1800 011 163** or go to **[www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)**