

# Gippsland Medicare Local

Countdown to 1 July 2012

## Connecting Gippslanders Health Needs



Arrangements to establish the Gippsland Medicare Local are in full swing, following the announcement by the Federal Government that it will be established from mid 2012.

The Gippsland Medicare Local Formation Committee will be working hard before the July 1, 2012 start date to engage with Local health professionals of all disciplines as well as other potential professional partners to explore how the new organisation can assist with the delivery of primary health care across the region.

Nicola Roxon, at a recent conference stressed the importance of Medicare Locals talking to local health businesses to assist in planning for what the community needs are at a local, regional and national level.

The Minister said the role for the Medicare Local will be to link different primary care services, Hospitals and aged care sectors, to identify where the gaps are in local health care and devise a system to fill those gaps where possible.

Medicare Locals have been

directed to initially focus on after hours care, then mental health and aged care.

Mr David Butt, Deputy Secretary, Department of Health and Ageing expressed a view that it will take time for Medicare Locals to fulfil expectations.

He explained that a likely timeline could be: in the first one to two years, focus on establishing the structure and system for primary care engagement; in years two, three and four build capacity working closely with the Local Hospital Networks; and in five years and beyond apply for new funding to implement new models of care.

Medicare Locals are not designed to be service providers in a direct sense.

What they will be designed to do is find and fill the service gaps without disturbing the solid planks of health care that already exist.

### Key tasks during the transition phase

Before 1 July next year:

- Incorporate the Gippsland Medicare Local
- Transitional Board appointed
- Medicare Local to enter into Commonwealth Funding agreement
- Transfer assets and liabilities from GP Divisions to Gippsland Medicare Local
- Advertise CEO position, early 2012
- Appoint CEO before 1 July 2012

**Want more information? Contact your local division or Primary Care Partnership early in 2012 to find out how your business or organisation can contribute to the future of a healthier Gippsland.**

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### Who can be members

Now that we have the formal approval and a start date (1 July 2012), engagement activities to encourage appropriate participation will increase.

To ensure appropriate industry and community input the structure of Gippsland Medicare Local includes the opportunity for involvement by members – that is anyone engaged in primary care services – to feed into a governance structure.

The structure will include a Board of Governance supported by advisory committees in East Gippsland, South Gippsland and Central West Gippsland.

The key points include:

The draft constitution document is in the final stages with an assistance from Russell Kennedy (solicitors)

Gippsland Medicare Local will be a company limited by guarantee;

Membership will be offered to organisations (with an ABN) that are involved in primary health care

The Board of Governance will consist of nine individuals (five elected by members and four nominated by the elected Board members) based on a skills matrix

defined in the constitution. The Skills matrix will ensure input that is essential, desirable and required to deliver best possible care to the community

Advisory Committees will be integral part of the governance model to guarantee appropriate advice.

The Working Group, which includes 12 members (six representatives from the existing Board of three GP Divisions and six from stakeholder organisations for example Community Health) is in place to oversee establishment of the Gippsland Medicare Local. Company formation, establishment of transition board and appointment of chief executive officer will be some of the primary tasks undertaken by this committee.

Keeping with the objective of perpetual engagement of General Practitioners, three GP Chapters (one in each region currently serviced by existing GP Divisions) are proposed to be part of the advisory structure. These GP Chapters will continue to offer networking opportunities to GPs and practice staff as well as providing communication



channels to Clinician Groups.

As well as the three GP Chapters, there will be a Regional Advisory Committee. The primary role of this committee is to support the ongoing engagement of primary health care organisations in the region. Membership of this committee will be drawn from the sector-wide spectrum, for example hospital networks, LGAs, ATSI organisations, community health services, NGOs etc.

Three GP Divisions have engaged the services of a consultant to co-ordinate the transition process that will lead to eventual winding-up of the existing GP Divisions – East

Gippsland Primary Health Alliance, Central West Gippsland Division of General Practice and General Practice Association, South Gippsland.

This process will ensure continuity in the delivery of programs/initiatives currently offered by the three GP Divisions while Gippsland Medicare Local transitions itself into capacity building. Department of Health and Ageing directives dictate that the assets and liabilities of existing GP Divisions shall be handed over to the Medicare Local on a date to be agreed by the interested parties.

### More \$ available for after hours services

The Division CEOs met with General Practice Victoria (GPV) early in December, and were told that initial information from the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) was that there will be more funding available for after hours programs through the Gippsland Medicare Local than what is currently on

offer. A dollar amount has not yet been specified, however. It was confirmed that DoHA will provide funding for the first three months, that is from 1 July to September, to the Gippsland Medicare Local to enable the new organisation to get up and running.

### WHO ELSE IS INVOLVED?

A number of Victorian regions will transition to Medicare Locals at the same time as Gippsland.

Other regions establishing from 1 July 2012, and the Divisions they currently cover, include:

Eastern Melbourne (Eastern Ranges GPA, Greater Eastern Primary Health) Goulburn Valley (Goulburn Valley DGP) Grampians (West Vic DGP, Ballarat DGP) Hume (Albury-Wodonga Regional GP Network, North East Victoria DGP).