How do general practitioners work with, and perceive, primary health care services directly funded by government?

Progress as at October 2010

Respondents

- PHC services were asked to nominate GPs and GP practices with whom they had a relationship

Interviews completed:
- 18 General Practitioners (target 20)
- 8 Practice nurses (target 10)
- 6 Divisions of General Practice (target 6)
Links with local PHC services

- Divisions - Most aware of the services available at their local PHCS.
- GPs — Majority reported limited links/awareness of services provided by local PHCS.
- PNs — Links with local PHCS related to practice location and situation.
- Sexual health services were found to have been accessed at some time by all GPs interviewed.

Enablers and barriers

**Enablers of links**
- Relationships, communication, trust
- Divisions as brokers
- Practice nurses - linking, chronic condition management

**Barriers to links**
- Communication and lack of awareness
- Access and availability of PHCS services
Improving links to local PHC services

Information and communication to GPs/PNs:
- Improve GP and PN awareness about PHCSs
- Direct promotion by local PHCSs of what they can provide to practices
- On-line GP access to PHCS information and to PHCS referral forms
- Better and regular feedback to GP
- Seek input from local GPs and PNs

Context and impact of health reform

- Workforce
- Funding issues
- Fee for service
- Chronic disease & care plans
- Corporate clinics
- GP Plus & Federal superclinics
Conclusions

- GPs have little familiarity with PHC services
- Low level of links reflects promotion and ways of interacting rather than concern about quality of care or patient outcomes
- Increasing demand for AH and educational support
- Impact of EPC on AH demand and supply
- Prefer in-house or known private providers
- Two way communication and feedback about shared patients important
- Uncertainly about future reform, PHCOs

Policy implications

- Divisions are important in facilitating links — impact of change to PHCOs?
- Practice nurses play large role as brokers of links
- PHCS need to actively promote to GPs
- Resources and time needed by GPs and PHCSs to forge and strengthen links