



The Royal Australasian
College of Physicians

30 May 2011

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Via Email: haa.reps@aph.gov.au

**National Health Reform Amendment (National Health Performance Authority)
Bill 2011**

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) welcomes the establishment of the National Health Performance Authority as a statutory authority, with a Bill that provides for its functions, powers, membership, committees, staffing, reporting and planning, and disclosure of information.

The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of more than 13,500 physicians—also known as medical specialists—and 5,000 trainees across Australian and New Zealand, representing more than 25 specialty areas of medicine including: addiction, cardiology, general paediatrics, neurology, oncology, palliative, public health, occupational and environmental, rehabilitation, respiratory and sexual health. Beyond the goal of medical excellence, the College is committed to developing health and social policies which bring vital improvements to the well-being of patients.

The College encourages the National Health Performance Authority to measure the health sector's performance on the delivery of integrated and co-ordinated care within community settings. Integrated primary and ambulatory services will facilitate the coordination of such services, help to identify service delivery gaps within the continuum of care and, importantly, enable patient access to *'the right care, at the right time, in the right location and by the right provider'*.

Recently, the RACP produced several position papers on national health reform, including Medicare Locals and Lead Clinicians Groups. Together, these submissions explain the College's vision for an integrated health care system that will deliver better patient outcomes. The submissions also provide details on how to reduce and/or avoid hospital admissions and deliver care in the appropriate settings. I have enclosed a copy of these submissions for your consideration.

The RACP welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee on the National Health Reform Amendment (National Health Performance Authority) Bill 2011. Our advice is as follows:

- The authority could be enhanced by including methods to assess the effectiveness of the links between Lead Clinicians Groups, Medicare Locals and Local Hospital Networks.
- When electronic health records are implemented, a number of relevant metrics will be able to be readily captured. For example, KPIs for quality use of medicines are difficult to get from paper records but much easier to obtain from electronic ones. For example, missed drug doses in hospitalised patients. Electronic health records will also make it much easier to capture laboratory and radiology use and outcomes in terms of diagnosis and medicine and surgery in terms of management.
- It is not sufficient to have indicators and collect data on them. The key issue with measurement is to have formal processes to foster constructive use of the collected data, including, for example, the National Lead Clinicians Group and jurisdiction participation.
- Measuring in-hospital mortality rates for index disorders such as Congestive Cardiac Failure, Acute Myocardial Infarction & nosocomial acquired infections provide crude data but this should be contextualised to demonstrate the measures are valid.
- Quarterly reports required from all hospitals presents a compliance burden. Consideration should be given to requiring reports less frequently; eg half yearly.
- The RACP strongly supports the involvement of the ACSQHC and NHMRC in determining appropriate standards.

The RACP would be pleased to assist with further development of the details of the National Health Reform Amendment (National Health Performance Authority) Bill 2011. Should you require further information, please contact Dianne Bennett, Senior Policy Officer, by telephone on 02 9256 9609, or by email at: dianne.bennett@racp.edu.au.

Yours sincerely

John Kolbe