



Australian Health Care Reform Alliance

C/- PO Box 280 Deakin West ACT 2600 ABN 64 051 645 674
www.healthreform.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE 26 July 2016

Prevention the key to better health outcomes for Australians and Government

The Australian Health Care Reform Alliance (AHCRA*) has strongly urged the Minister for Health and Aged Care to focus on two key areas during the next Parliament – an investment in prevention and action to ensure Australia’s poorest families and individuals are not harmed by implementation of Budget cost-cutting measures.

Australia is an acknowledged world leader in road safety, tobacco control and HIV/AIDS, where complementary multi-level strategies have saved many thousands of Australian lives in the last twenty years. So Australia has the expertise to apply the lessons from these successes to other issues such as obesity, alcohol and drug use, and others, all of which cause significant ill-health in the population and consequential health care costs. AHCRA proposes that this world-class prevention expertise be harnessed in developing prevention strategies that will reap enormous benefits for Australians’ health, and reduce overall health care costs.

AHCRA also fully supports the Australian Council of Social Service’s (ACOSS) call to ensure that those on the lowest incomes are shielded from certain Budget savings, including the proposed cuts to unemployment, family payments and energy supplements. Together, these cuts would leave many low-income families \$100 a week worse off. There is overwhelming evidence that Australians on the lowest incomes also bear the heaviest burden of disease and disability. Rather than diminishing their health outlook through reduced living standards, maintaining and improving the standard of living of this lowest socioeconomic status group in our community would flow on to better health and lower health care costs over time.

In its letter to the Minister, AHCRA also praised the Health Care Homes Trial initiative that is about to be implemented. (The trial will involve 200 GP practices nationally and their consumers with chronic diseases and complex conditions. It will replace fee-for-service with capitation payments.) AHCRA envisages that the adoption of capitation funding will create the environment for innovations and flexibilities in how care is provided, ultimately to the benefit of those consumers. AHCRA did note there are some key obstacles to this intelligent reform and that the Minister needs to ensure sufficiently careful planning and ongoing capacity building are undertaken to facilitate its success.

Contact: Tony McBride (Chair) 0407 531 468 chair@healthreform.org.au

**AHCRA is a coalition of national and state organisations, including those representing the medical profession, nursing, allied health, rural and remote health, health services and consumer groups*