

## Communiqué

October 2014

The following items have been highlighted for your information as a result of the October 2014 South West Health Alliance Ltd (SWHA) Board of Directors meeting. The focus for the meeting was dealing with the current business of the South West WA Medicare Local and preparing for the future of primary health care in the south west of Western Australia.

### Future

Despite an indication in May 2014 by the Federal Government that funding will be withdrawn from Medicare Locals effective 30 June 2015 there has been little further information. To date the government has not announced the boundaries for Primary Health Networks. This is crucial information, which will underpin and shape the tender process. The delay in this announcement is heightening concerns around an already challenging process for those of us involved in and committed to the sector.

SWHA is cognisant that less than 9 months remain to have a fully operational Primary Health Network in place and contracting services.

The SWHA Board are considering all available options for the future. These options will be clearer once the PHN boundaries are known. Currently they include developing a process to transfer relevant information to a newly created PHN in early 2015.

### Primary Health Networks (PHN)

SWHA is unable to fully assess its future position or provide substantial information to members and stakeholders until PHN boundaries and the content of the invitation to apply are announced.

While so little substantive information is available, it is useful to summarise some of the significant unknowns surrounding the establishment of PHNs. These include:

- Boundaries
- Definition of market failure
- Funding allocation to each PHN
- Funding allocation to Aboriginal health and mental health services (under review)
- Precise PHN function and performance indicators
- If a PHN can provide clinical services from other funding sources (eg Headspace, HACC etc.)

Currently there is much speculation regarding the structure and roles of PHNs and the best model for developing optimal primary health care into the future. A recent [media release from the National Rural Health Alliance](#) clearly states the case for regionally governed models of primary health care.

The SWHA Board is currently exploring all options with respect to partnering with other organisations and country Medicare Locals. We intend to pool our collective wisdom, experience and expertise to develop a model that meets the needs of consumers and providers in the rural regions of Western Australia.

### AGM

As reported previously the AGM is fast approaching and will be held on Friday 7 November 2014 in Bunbury.

Formal notification of the meeting and agenda will be distributed in the coming days.

For more information regarding the contents of this communique, please contact Kate Clarke, CEO, [ceo@sw-medicarelocal.com.au](mailto:ceo@sw-medicarelocal.com.au)