

Wednesday 14 April 2010

For immediate release

CALLS TO PROTECT VICTORIA'S PRIMARY HEALTHCARE MODEL

An alliance of Victorian healthcare groups is calling for the protection of the state's unique system of providing primary healthcare services.

The Victorian Healthcare Association (VHA), General Practice Victoria (GPV) and Statewide Primary Care Partnerships (SPCP) took the unusual step of penning a joint letter today to Victorian Premier John Brumby.

The letter tells the Premier that these groups have "serious concerns" about how the Federal Government's proposed Primary Health Care Organisations (PHCO) will be governed.

The three groups, which represent public health services, Divisions of General Practice in Victoria and Victoria's Primary Health Care Partnerships, want the Victorian Premier to resist the current form of the Federal Government's plans for their sector.

"The approach being proposed by the federal government has the potential to jeopardise 10 years of investment and development in collaborative approaches to primary healthcare integration across the state," the letter says.

Major concerns about the Rudd Government's plans for primary healthcare include:

- They do not require that all key players in the primary healthcare sector are involved in the establishment of PHCOs
- The lack of recognition for Victoria's collaborative approach to providing primary healthcare services

The VHA's Acting CEO, Sara Duncan said that the Prime Minister's plans for primary healthcare, if unchanged, would jeopardise Victoria's unique primary healthcare model.

This model is characterised by a network of Community Health Services with strong connections to GPs and Divisions of GP offering multidisciplinary and connected healthcare.

"It is vital that the Federal Government's proposed PHCO are entirely new organisations," Ms Duncan said.

"The establishment of PHCOs must include Community Health Services, community service organisations, local government as well as Divisions of General Practice.

"These groups already work well together in Victoria to provide integrated primary healthcare to improve the health of Victorians and to keep people out of our hospitals.

Continued over ...



Victorian Healthcare Association

Statewide PCPs



Wednesday 14 April 2010

"We welcome the concept of PHCOs, but believe they need to be implemented carefully to avoid losing the benefits to communities that come from improved integrated health promotion, service coordination and early intervention in chronic disease management.

"To exclude some of these stakeholders from a role in the establishment of PHCO risks the system of integrated health promotion, service coordination and early intervention in chronic disease management that has benefitted the Victorian community."

For further information and
Interviews, contact

Sara Duncan
Acting CEO
Victorian Healthcare Association
(03) 9094 7777 or (0409) 362 382

Jennifer Gale
Chair, Statewide PCP Chairs Executive
(03) 5422 9900

MEDIA RELEASE