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Conference Abstract

Enabling integrated care through policies and cross-sector collaborations

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Abstract

Introduction: Over successive health reform agreements in Australia, there has been a concerted effort to promote integration between different levels of government and across health sectors, with a view to improving health outcomes for Australians. In particular, the Commonwealth has worked closely with state/territory governments and both primary health care organisations and local hospital networks to develop a National Primary Health Care Strategic Framework.

Aims: To identify Commonwealth, regional and shared policies that enable integrated primary health care.

Method: Pragmatic literature review to map policy documents relevant to integration in primary health care.

Results: The main focus of policy documents varied, not only by jurisdiction, but also according to the type of policy lever and function, including: regulation, financial incentives, resource creation and service delivery. Some of the key regulatory enablers included: frameworks to align resources; partnerships and guidelines that specify priorities and shared goals; and formal/informal arrangements to support multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral teamwork. Resource creation policies included: establishing primary health care organisations dedicated to integrated care; and information technology to enable shared data. Financial incentives were used in targeted ways to influence integrated care in jurisdictional policies.

Conclusion: Integrated primary health care is enabled by policies that facilitate integration across sectors, between health care providers and at different levels of the health system.

Keywords

Australia, policy, stewardship, creating resources, financial incentives