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