

MEDIA RELEASE – Embargoed until 9am, 9 September 2022

Focus on the Future - GP workforce in the ACT and NSW

The ACT and NSW Primary Health Networks (PHN) will play a key role in the distribution of the GP trainee workforce after being awarded a grant through the Australian Government's Health Workforce Program.

ACT PHN CEO Megan Cahill said the consortium of the ACT and 10 NSW PHNs will provide advice on the priority locations for GP training placements to meet current and future GP workforce needs, through the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) Program GP Workforce Planning and Prioritisation grant. This work will make a vital contribution to the future of GP training that will be delivered by the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) from February 2023.

"The PHN's advice will inform the distribution of the GP trainee workforce across communities in the ACT and NSW and support the transition to college-led GP training. It will also enable greater visibility of training opportunities to support GP trainees to undertake their training and acquire the skills to meet community's health needs. The distribution approach under the College-led model deliberately provides a level of flexibility in how registrar distribution is achieved to ensure that placement decisions support a safe and positive registrar experience," said Ms Cahill.

PHNs will use their well-established relationships with local general practices and stakeholders to map the existing and future general practitioner and trainee workforce in each GP catchment area.

"We will collect data on the current GP workforce, training practice accreditation, capacity and any retirement and succession plans. This information will be used to identify areas of current high community need and future growth," said Ms Cahill.

The AGPT Program trains doctors in general practice who can then work as GPs anywhere in Australia. The three to four-year training program offers 1,500 training places each year under a competitive merit-based process. It is delivered by the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP).

The grant will enable an increase in the data analytics capacity of each PHN to map community need against workforce and GP training requirements.

"PHNs are well placed to provide this advice. We've supported our primary care workforce and established highly effective stakeholder relationships across the health system since 2015. We have deeply embedded working relationships with general practice and have also conducted comprehensive Health Needs Assessments to determine the health and service needs of the population and health care system within our catchment regions," said Ms Cahill.