

**THE HON TANYA PLIBERSEK MP
Minister for Health**

MEDIA RELEASE

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New national body to support Medicare Locals

The Australian General Practice Network (AGPN), a national primary care organisation, will form on 1 July 2012, a new national body for Medicare Locals– the Gillard Government’s landmark new primary health care networks.

Health Minister Tanya Plibersek today announced that AGPN’s proposal to form the Medicare Local national body, to be called the Australian Medicare Local Network, has been accepted by the Government.

“Medicare Locals will make it easier for patients to access the services they need, by linking local GPs, nursing and other health professionals, hospitals and aged care, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisations, and maintaining up to date local service directories,” Ms Plibersek said.

“To achieve these objectives, the Australian Medicare Local Network will lead the way in assisting the nationwide network of 62 Medicare Locals as they deliver comprehensive primary health care services for local communities.”

The Australian Medicare Local Network will build and expand on AGPN’s current functions supporting divisions of general practice by:

- Supporting each Medicare Local to build strong links with Local Hospital Networks.
- Working with a wider range of general practice, health, social care and aged care stakeholders to strengthen and improve the country’s primary health care system to provide better, more accessible front line care for Australians.
- Promoting and developing Medicare Locals’ potential across the country to deliver locally designed primary health care services to meet community needs.

The new national organisation’s governance will comprise a skills-based board including clinical and community leaders.

Medicare Locals will improve frontline primary care services for each local community through activities including better linking health services, supporting face-

to-face after hours GP services, and identifying local health care needs and coordinating services to address those needs.

For more information on the role and function of the Australian Medicare Local Network see www.yourhealth.gov.au

For media inquiries, please contact Simon Crittle on 0466 773 531