**Title**

An Introduction to Primary Health Networks (PHNs) for GPs

**Author and affiliations**

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**Background**

PHNs represent an important but widely misunderstood element of the primary care system of Australia1. Amongst GPs there is a lack of clarity as to what PHNs can and cannot do, as well as how best to engage them in providing healthcare to their patients and communities. Furthermore PHNs have a mandate to improve the co-ordination of care for patients which includes entities (such as hospitals and health services) which are linked to General Practice. By engaging PHNs appropriately, it is hoped that GPs will be better able to support primary healthcare, resulting in improved health outcomes for their patients and communities.

**Aims**

* Improve GPs' understanding of how PHNs work with a view to increasing engagement with PHNs.
* Help GPs to understand how to best communicate the needs of their patients and communities with PHNs such as through Health Needs Assessments and involvement with Clinical Councils.

Improved engagement between GPs and PHNs would therefore help to advance the GP18 theme of “Healthy Community”.

**Method**

Provide a presentation explaining the role of PHNs, resources available and limitations to services that can be provided. This will involve explaining features such as the funding cycle, commissioning process and importance of Health Needs Assessments in the service delivery of a PHN. The presentation is not intended to be definitive but more introductory in nature.

**Results**

N/A

**Conclusion**

PHNs are an under-utilised resource in the provision of efficient and effective of primary healthcare in Australia. By clarifying the roles, resources and limitations of PHNs, it is hoped that GPs will be better able to engage with PHNs on behalf of their patients and communities.

**References** (If applicable)

1. Mahat, Moe (2017). AMA PHN Member Survey. *Australian Medicine*, 29.23 December 11. 17. https://ama.com.au/sites/default/files/ausmed/Edition%202923%20%284%29.pdf