

COMMUNIQUE

NATIONAL PREVENTIVE HEALTH STRATEGY PREVENTION WORKSHOPS: 6 NOVEMBER 2019

The Minister for Health, the Hon Greg Hunt MP, has committed to the development of a National Preventive Health Strategy (the Strategy). It is intended that the Strategy provide a long-term vision for improving the health of all Australians and that it stimulates a systemic shift to achieve a better balance between treatment and prevention. It will be a national strategy that includes primary and secondary prevention, and it will not have a disease-specific approach. The Strategy will be underpinned by the strongest research available.

An Expert Steering Committee has been appointed to provide advice on the development of the Strategy, with the first meeting held on 26 September 2019. Broad consultation is integral to the development of the Strategy and the views of public health groups, key stakeholders and consumers will be represented in the Strategy.

A series of consultations are being held in October and early November. Two prevention workshops were held on the 6 November 2019 in Melbourne. Participants included representatives from consumer groups, government departments, not-for-profit organisations, Primary Health Networks, research organisations and other experts in prevention.

CONSULTATION CONSIDERATIONS

Consultation participants considered the vision and scope for the Strategy, as well as systems approaches to prevention.

Some of the themes emerging from the discussion were:

- Health is determined by influences within and outside the health system, so prevention is the responsibility of many.
- The importance of equity and reducing health differences and the need for a balance between systemic and individual approaches.
- There is a need to empower individuals to be able to make healthy decisions, including through building health literacy
- The health system could be strengthened to engage people early, especially those at higher risk
- The commercial determinants of health, the role of regulation and partnerships with business.
- The need to establish a mechanism to embed prevention funding and a strong focus on effective, sustained implementation and accountability.
- How the Strategy can support and enhance existing national plans and programs.
- The role of research in guiding good practice and the need for a stronger focus on economic evaluation.

NEXT STEPS

The following next steps will be undertaken:

- The Expert Steering Committee will meet again late November to consider the outcomes of the consultations.
- There will be a public consultation on the draft Strategy in the first half of 2020.