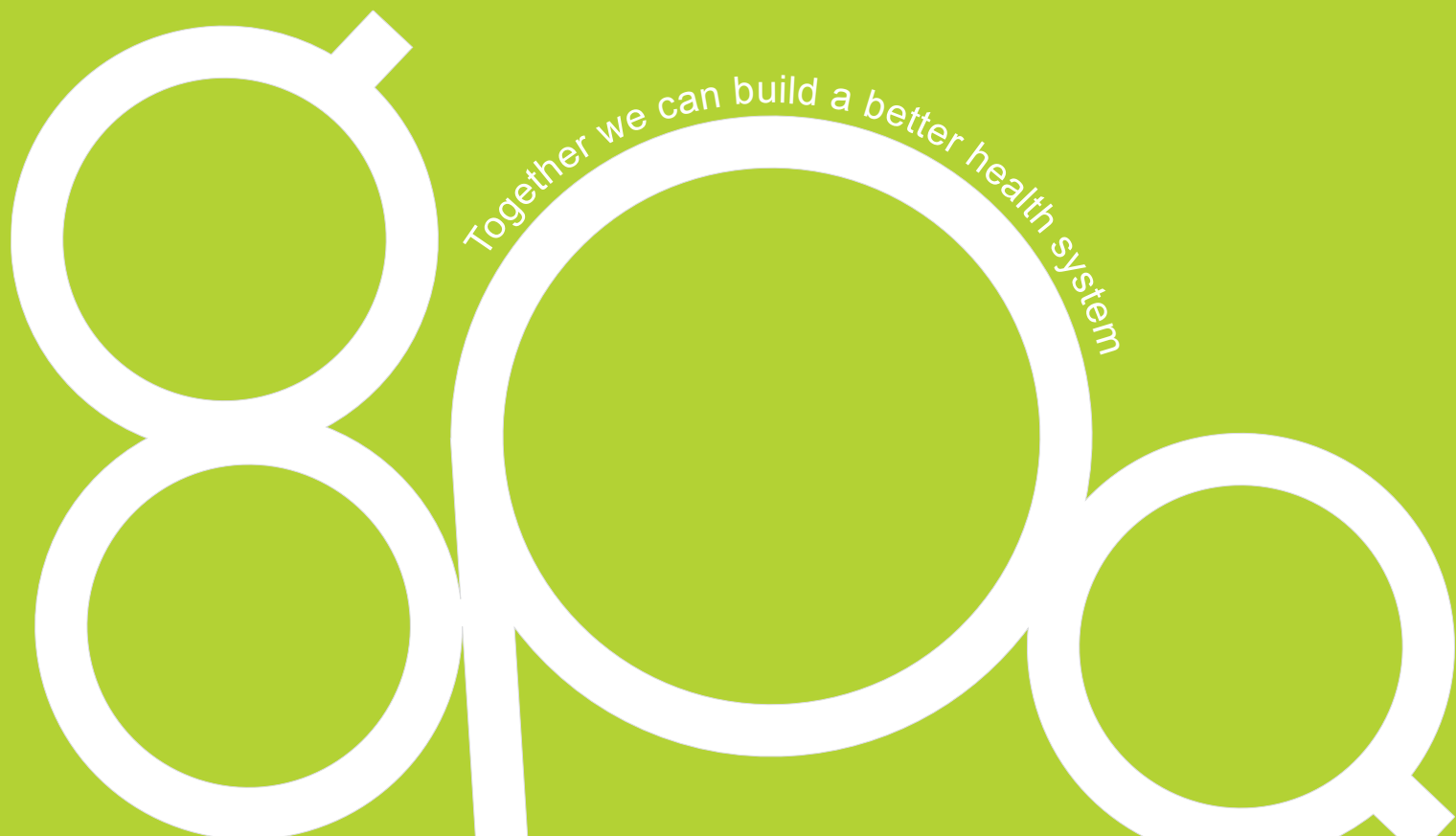


# Healthy Queenslanders 2012 - 2015

Solutions from General Practice Queensland



---

# Together we can build a better health system

---

Queenslanders know and understand that a strong health system is not just about hospital beds and waiting lists. Both Queensland Health and the primary health care sector have been working hard to improve primary health care services with innovative community and hospital avoidance programs that meet local needs.

National health reform provides unprecedented opportunities to further improve services as well as advance integration and cooperation between primary health care and the Local Health and Hospital Networks (LHHNs). While the focus on local solutions is welcomed, a state-wide response is also needed, particularly for the purposes of building system capacity, improving efficiency and reducing duplication.

General Practice Queensland (GPQ) has identified a number of initiatives where state investment now will pay dividends in the future:

- **Community First:** Supporting local solutions to care for people in the community.
- **Connecting Queenslanders to Health Care:** Connecting Queenslanders to the care they need.
- **Rural Communities in Command:** Supporting rural communities to achieve health services that meet local needs.
- **Disaster Ready Primary Health Care:** Building capacity within primary health care to respond to disasters.
- **Building Healthy Families:** Keeping Queensland families healthy for life

## The **outcomes** of our solutions will:

**Reduce** pressures on the Queensland hospital system by delivering more care in the community and preventing avoidable hospital admissions

**Enhance** the community's understanding of the array of services available in the Queensland health system and how best to access the care they need

**Build** a vision for rural and remote communities to achieve locally responsive, effective and sustainable health services

**Strengthen** the capacity of the Queensland primary healthcare sector to respond to disaster

**Deliver** general practice and primary health care population based health solutions to support state and national health policies and priorities such as health promotion and prevention, and chronic disease management

These outcomes will help to achieve a stronger primary health care system.

Providing Queenslanders with **the right care, at the right time, in the right setting**, ultimately takes the pressure off hospitals.



# Supporting local solutions to care for people in the community

The growing burden of chronic disease, compounded by an ageing and increasing population is putting an excessive strain on hospitals and the health system.

An effective primary health care sector is a crucial enabler for reducing avoidable hospital admissions by providing:

- effective prevention programs for keeping people well;
- timely and effective access to health care in the community

The benefits of providing primary health services in the community are significant - for the patient who receives care in their home or in a community setting; for the health system in reducing the pressure on public infrastructure; and for governments in reducing the cost of avoidable hospital admissions.

Therefore, any programs that target avoidable admissions need to be coordinated across the hospital and primary health care settings.

Joint planning and management of health service delivery needs to occur across LHHNs and the new Medicare Locals and will:

- ensure the most efficient use of available resources and infrastructure;
- facilitate the design of new multidisciplinary models of shared care in a community setting;
- enable the development of innovative prevention programs.



## Community First

A three year state-wide hospital avoidance program that will build the capacity of both LHHNs and the primary health care sector to collaborate and implement innovative models to deliver patient focused, integrated health care in the community.

Outcomes will be achieved through:

- state level coordination and capacity building and the identification of priority areas for local action and shared learnings;
- diffusion of innovation, on-going education and training, and embedded quality improvement and evaluation practices;
- local projects that deliver collaborative hospital avoidance programs.

# Connecting Queenslanders to the care they need

Queenslanders and their families need to know how best they can access the care they need and how to navigate the health system in the most effective way - “right care, right time, right place”.

It is acknowledged that the health system is complex and understanding how to access the range of services available can be challenging.

Health Consumers Queensland (HCQ), are working with Queensland LHHNs to develop consumer engagement strategies. Medicare Locals are also required to develop consumer and community engagement strategies to identify areas of improvement and unmet need in primary health care in their region.

GPQ sees an opportunity to complement and strengthen the work of HCQ and support Medicare Locals to work directly with their communities to build consumer confidence and knowledge around how to best access the care available to them.

Building the community’s capacity will empower Queenslanders to understand how best to use the comprehensive health services available for their community.

Such understanding will increase access to appropriate services in a timely manner. Informing and empowering the community in this way, has the potential to maximise efficient use of the system and decrease instances of avoidable hospital admission.

GPQ is well placed to coordinate this important community based initiative in a non-political context and work with the government and key stakeholders to build a Queensland that understands and is empowered to use their health system.



## Connecting Queenslanders to Health Care

A collaborative program to build community understanding of the new health system and empower Queenslanders to access the range of available services.

Outcomes will be achieved through:

- development, coordination and support of a network of community based workers to:
  - increase community awareness and understanding of available health services;
  - increase understanding about the appropriate use of available services.
- development and ongoing evaluation of resources and tools to ensure state-wide delivery of the key messages consistent with “right care, right time, right place” across the state;
- developing and maintaining linkages with existing local community organisations and representatives to ensure key messages are relevant and meaningful at the local level.

# Supporting rural communities to achieve health services that meet local needs

Delivering an appropriate level of health services in rural and remote communities presents a unique challenge for Queensland.

The Commonwealth and the state governments have supported the devolution of health system management to the local level through the establishment of LHHNs and Medicare Locals. For particularly isolated rural and remote communities, there are opportunities for even greater local planning and management of services.

The benefits of these communities taking responsibility and ownership for health care in their area are substantial: for the local community in participating in priority setting; resource allocation and health service delivery and ensuring that services are targeted at areas of local need; and for governments in reducing the costs of health system management and allocating such savings to increased health services.

While rural and remote communities will benefit from taking greater ownership for health care in the long term, change is not always welcomed. Building a vision of future health care services and a mandate for change is the first step in the change process.



## Rural Communities in Command

A three year state-wide program that will, in partnership with Medicare Locals, build the capacity of rural communities to take responsibility and ownership of their health services and establish a mandate for change.

Outcomes will be achieved by:

- building an understanding of existing and visionary service models;
- establishing a mandate for change in communities;
- developing a change management strategy, framework and tools for communities that wish to transition.

# Building capacity within primary health care to respond to disasters

Recent disasters, both within Queensland and nationally, have highlighted the need for better integration of primary health care services within the existing health emergency response plans.

General Practice is the cornerstone of primary health care and already plays a key role in disaster recovery through doctor-patient relationships.

However the trusted networks of the sector also provide a remarkable resource and opportunity for systematic coordination of disaster response.

By using General Practice for both disaster response and recovery we avoid duplication and additional complexity, which international evidence suggests is critical to effective disaster management.

A central strategy for enhancing disaster response is building community resilience. The role of primary health care in building community resilience extends across a variety of areas, but the immediate focus should be on the readiness of General Practice to respond to any disaster.

Such an outcome can be achieved through linkages with existing disaster management planning in the respective regions.



## Disaster Ready Primary Care

A targeted program to build community resilience to disasters by enhancing General Practice disaster readiness.

Outcomes will be achieved through:

- participation by General Practice in existing regional and state wide disaster planning networks;
- establishment of a state wide disaster readiness program for General Practice which would include:
  - establishment of a Queensland early alert system for General Practice;
  - support for General Practice based disaster plans;
  - development of targeted resources and toolkits for general practice to ensure disaster readiness.

# Keeping Queensland families healthy for life

It is widely acknowledged that investment in primary and secondary prevention is a key enabler for reducing the demand on the hospital sector.

The following lifestyle risk factors need to be addressed to prevent chronic disease:

- Alcohol
- Depression
- Nutrition
- Obesity
- Physical Activity
- Smoking

Primary health care providers and General Practice are in a unique position to provide personalised care based on an ongoing relationship with patients in the context of their family, friends and the community. Research indicates that a brief conversation, in the right context, about lifestyle risk factors can result in a move to more positive lifestyle choices.

GPQ has successfully delivered a variety of lifestyle intervention programs through general practice. The **Healthy Interventions Project** brought together staff from General Practice and Queensland Health to discuss and share learnings around the provision of healthy lifestyle advice in a General Practice setting.

GPQ is well placed to extend this program to all primary health care providers, including allied health, aged care and other community providers. Working in collaboration with Medicare Locals and other community partners to further develop the program, this initiative will build capacity in the sector to provide healthy lifestyle advice to Queensland families in a personalised community setting.



## Building Healthy Families

A two year state-wide program that will directly target Queensland families to raise awareness of the importance of lifestyle modification and early intervention in preventing chronic disease.

Outcomes will be achieved through:

- a state wide project that delivers consistent prevention messages to Queensland families through their primary health care providers;
- development of tools and resources to support the delivery of these key messages;
- supporting local implementation of the program with key community partners.

---

# Why GPQ

---

## Who we are

Established in 1997, General Practice Queensland (GPQ) is a not-for-profit (NFP) reputable organisation for primary health care in the state of Queensland.

We believe that stronger integration and support for the primary care sector ensures the overall cost effectiveness of the health system and determines positive health outcomes for Queenslanders. We are a truly Queensland membership based organisation, with members in every part of the state.

## What we do

GPQ promotes the central role of general practice in primary health care. We advocate for and lobby on behalf of members to inform health policy through the provision of advice to governments and non-government organisations.

We provide a range of strategic and operational support to assist members in the implementation of a wide range of initiatives. Results from collaboration and engagement with key stakeholders help us identify priority areas and guide responses to opportunities and challenges such as funding, planning and quality improvement.

## How we do it

We link approximately 4,499 general practitioners, 1,253 general practices, 2,091 practice nurses as well as other practice staff and allied health providers in Queensland. These links provide effective communication channels for gathering and dissemination of information. Dialogue with members, stakeholders and consumers includes the synthesis of information to strengthen the delivery of health care that improves the health of Queenslanders.

Relationships with government and non-government organisations provide us with integral avenues by which we can genuinely inform policy decisions. We believe that stronger integration and support for the primary care sector ensures the overall cost effectiveness of the health system and determines positive health outcomes for Queenslanders.



### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

Ann Maree Liddy  
Chief Executive Officer  
General Practice Queensland

GPO Box 2546  
Brisbane QLD 4001

**T** 07 3105 8300  
**E** [aliddy@gpql.com.au](mailto:aliddy@gpql.com.au)