



PHN Practice Support Frequently Asked Questions

Primary Health Networks (PHNs) are independent primary health care organisations, located throughout Australia. They are funded to undertake three core functions:

- They commission health services to meet the identified and prioritised needs of people in their regions and address identified gaps in primary health care. This may include working with others in the community to plan and deliver innovative services that meet specific health needs.
- Through practice support, they work closely with general practitioners (GPs) and other health professionals to build health workforce capacity and the delivery of high quality care.
- They work collaboratively within their regions to integrate health services at the local level to create a better experience for patients, encourage better use of health resources, and eliminate service duplication.

What is PHN practice support?

Practice support includes a wide range of activities intended to support health practices and health care professionals to improve their efficiency, effectiveness and coordination of care.

PHN practice support teams work closely with general practitioners, specialists, pharmacies, and other health service providers to build the capacity of primary health care services to the delivery of high quality patient care and health outcomes.

Activities may be clinical or business related and can be delivered to practices, individual GPs or other staff (such as practice managers, nurses, allied health professionals or administrative staff), depending on the identified needs within a PHN's region.

What activities are included in the PHN practice support role?

The PHN practice support role is diverse and involves a range of activities including (but not limited to):

- quality improvement and adoption of best practice methods
- promoting and improving practice accreditation
- professional and workforce development (e.g. education, training and support)
- supporting the uptake and meaningful use of digital health systems (e.g. infrastructure, software, and use of the My Health Record)
- designing and supporting quality care initiatives (e.g. chronic disease management, mental health, diabetes, immunisation, Closing the Gap, and sexual health)
- supporting patient data management (e.g. software, guidelines, or training and meaningful use of data)
- cultural awareness and competency.

How do PHNs provide practice support?

PHNs provide practice support in a variety of ways, including (but not limited to):

- face-to-face support, including on-site practice visits
- phone and email support
- newsletters and bulletin updates
- information, tools, publications and resources
- training and webinars
- continuing professional development, networking and educational events.

Where can I get more information about PHNs and practice support?

For more information about the practice support activities being undertaken in your region, please contact your local PHN or visit their website. PHN contact details are available on the Department of Health's PHN website at www.health.gov.au/phn.