

MEDIA RELEASE



Mike Symon MP, Federal Labor Member for Deakin
Anna Burke MP, Federal Labor Member for Chisholm

Tuesday 28th June 2011

MEDICARE LOCAL TO CONTINUE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mike Symon, Federal Member for Deakin and Anna Burke, Federal Member for Chisholm, today announced that one of the nation's first Medicare Locals will be established in Melbourne's eastern suburbs from 1 July 2011.

The Whitehorse area is set to be one of the first communities around Australia to lead primary health care reform with a Medicare Local.

The Melbourne East GP Network will oversee the new Medicare Local for the Whitehorse area and its surrounds, guiding its role of linking local primary health care services and improving local services.

Mr Symon said that the new Medicare Local would enable the delivery of better health services to patients.

"Sometimes people find it difficult to find the right service at the right time, or once they have seen their GP find that the next steps in their treatment do not flow easily," Mr Symon said.

"Medicare Local is all about better co-ordination of GP and primary health care services and fixing gaps in services," Mr Symon said.

Ms Burke noted the capacity of Medicare Local to work with GPs, nurses, allied health professionals, Indigenous health organisations and Local Hospital Networks in identifying and responding to gaps in local health services.

"I know we have great health care professionals in the Whitehorse area and our new Medicare Local will deliver even better results for our area", Ms Burke said.

"In particular, Medicare Local will play a key role in helping to improve access to after-hours care, responding to chronic disease prevention and providing management programs and mental health initiatives", Ms Burke said.

Medicare Local is an initiative of the Federal Government.

Media Contacts: Fergus Vial – 0419 691 516 (Mike Symon's office), Simon Miller – 0417 140 935 (Anna Burke's office)