

GP Advisory Committee (GPAC) in Focus

Highlight – 19 September Meeting

PHN's role in supporting doctors' mental health

The Board of Wentworth Healthcare, provider of NBMPHN, asked that the issue of doctors' mental health be discussed at GPAC.

At the meeting members were told that a new Workforce Support and Retention Strategy is currently being developed by NBMPHN and a component of this will be supporting GP wellbeing.

The following ideas to support junior doctors and other members of the GP community were endorsed by members:

- A registrar orientation program each rotation. This includes a group orientation session where registrars find out about the health profile of the region, the role and work of the PHN, opportunities for registrars to get involved and how they can find information on the PHN website.
- A designated person at NBMPHN a registrar can call on for any inquiries including gaining assistance with navigating the health system in our region.
- Introducing a "New GP Program" where a senior PHN representative meets with the GP new to the area to field questions and provide an overview of the programs/initiatives they can benefit from or potentially be involved in. The representative can take a laptop/tablet and help the GP navigate around the PHN website. An ongoing point-of-contact at the PHN can be established e.g. workforce support officer.

GPs seeing GPs

Members advised that GPs should be encouraged to have a GP of their own and go for at least an annual check-up. It was suggested that the PHN could play a role in enabling doctors to overcome the barriers they currently faced seeing a GP. These included limited time; embarrassment having to sit in a waiting room with patients they may know; workload; and the need to be seen out of hours. Members felt that access to a list of doctors happy to see other doctors is necessary.