

# Nepean Blue Mountains Medicare Local Update

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*An information update for partners & stakeholders of the Nepean Blue Mountains Medicare Local*

## MEDICARE LOCAL SUCCESS!

On Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November, the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon, announced funding for the commencement of the Nepean Blue Mountains Medicare Local from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012.

This new health organisation will give the local communities of Penrith, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Lithgow and their health professionals the opportunity to work together to create a better primary health care system.

A joint application for establishment of the Medicare Local was submitted earlier this year by the three local Divisions of General Practice in Nepean, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury areas, with support from Lithgow GPs, Practice Nursing, Allied Health Professionals, consumers and other local organisations.

The three chairs of the Divisions, Dr Shiva Prakash, Dr Andrew Knight and Dr Mark Brunacci said they were thrilled with the news and the opportunities it will provide for the local communities.

“A strong primary health care system can help keep people well and out of hospital.” said Dr Shiva Prakash, local GP and Chairman of the Nepean Division of General Practice, the lead agency for the group.

“To do this, the local community and the different health care professionals need to work together to identify local health issues & develop solutions” Dr Prakash said.

Primary health care generally refers to first line health care provided out of the hospital setting. It includes GPs, practice nurses, podiatrists, dietitians, physiotherapists, psychologists and other allied health professionals.

The new Medicare Local will cover the Nepean, Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Hawkesbury areas. It will build on the success of the current Divisions of General Practice in these areas.

Divisions of General Practice were set up to support GPs to improve the health of their patients. The new Medicare Local will continue to support GPs but also involve other health care professionals and organisations to achieve better health for the local community. With more flexible funding, the Medicare Local will have a greater focus on prevention and health promotion.

***The Nepean Blue Mountains Medicare Local will work towards ensuring the community has the right services and that these are connected and easy to access in a timely manner.***