

# **Access to Medicines Working Group**

## **Communique**

### **6 March 2023**

The Access to Medicines Working Group (AMWG) met via videoconference on 6 March 2023. Attendees included representatives from Medicines Australia, the pharmaceutical industry and the Department of Health and Aged Care (the Department).

Members reflected on the first Horizon Scanning forum held in December 2022 and agreed that it was a positive experience, and that a forthcoming report from the event will assist in developing future forums.

As part of the review of the PBS activity-based cost model, the Department noted a time in motion study is ongoing. This includes reviewing the activities undertaken following the March Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) cycle. The study will continue through the remainder of 2023 to ensure a suitable sample size. Further information will be provided at a future AMWG meeting.

Members discussed the Strategic Agreement between Medicines Australia and the Commonwealth, and ongoing oversight of progress.

Members discussed the importance of the Enhanced Consumer Engagement Process and reiterated the commitment expressed in the Strategic Agreement to implement a process that is co-designed with consumers, clinicians, industry and other stakeholders. Members agreed that the views of consumers on this work should be led by consumers. Members agreed to discuss a co-design proposal provided by Industry out-of-session about how all the relevant stakeholders, including consumers, can be involved in the co-design.

Members reviewed and discussed the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Process Improvement metrics collected for 2021-2022. Members noted the consistent positive progress made on reducing time to PBS listing of medicines following a positive PBAC recommendation. Members noted the collection of Stage 2 Process Improvement metrics for the first time and the high success rates for submissions made in the Early Resolution and Early Re-entry resubmission pathways. Members discussed the overarching goals of the Stage 2 reforms and agreed that this would be discussed further in the newly formed Key Performance Indicator (KPI) and Metrics Subgroup. Members noted that a subset of these metrics will be made publicly available in April.

Members discussed the framework of the AMWG and the role and number of subgroups to address key goals of the new Strategic Agreement. Members also discussed the functions of the Joint Oversight Committee (JOC). Members agreed that the AMWG should work towards increasing the group's efficiency and reducing duplicative administrative activities.

Members discussed the publication of a qualitative metric which captures the key reasons why submissions considered by the PBAC receive 'not-recommended' outcomes. Members agreed that consumer-focused metrics are useful if they are captured in a meaningful manner. Members noted that the PBAC Secretariat will consider how the metric will support a meaningful engagement with the PBAC and this will be discussed at a future AMWG meeting.

Members noted a presentation provided on the current status of the Health Products Portal (HPP) and future expansion to its functionality. Members noted the importance of the HPP and its functionality as a single hub for applications seeking reimbursement.

The AMWG members will reconvene at the next meeting which is expected to be held in August this year.