



## Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding

**Submission Number:** 123  
**Name:** Amplar Health  
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## **Amplar Health submission to the Terms of Reference of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding**

Amplar Health commends the NSW Government on the Special Commission of Inquiry into Healthcare Funding. We recognise the potential of the Inquiry to stimulate change and reform, and to enhance our health system to meet the future needs of the New South Wales (NSW) community.

Amplar Health has been a trusted delivery partner to the NSW public health system for more than two decades. Through our partnerships, we work alongside passionate and highly-skilled public health teams, complementing the work that they do. Working collaboratively, private providers have a role to play in supporting the public health system to address system and workforce constraints, create efficiencies and improve access and outcomes for patients. This was most evident during the pandemic, when Amplar Health partnered with NSW Health (and health bodies in other jurisdictions) to rapidly build capacity and flexibly respond to the evolving needs of patients and the health system.

Amplar Health is committed to supporting the sustainability of the health system and improving the health of all Australians. We are the health service delivery company of Medibank, which provides private health insurance to one million people in NSW. Amplar Health understands this Inquiry as an opportunity to explore contemporary funding and delivery models, and how technical and clinical innovations can address current and emerging challenges in the health system, and deliver more timely, accessible, patient-centred and high-quality care for the NSW community.

We encourage the Commissioner and Inquiry Team to, in particular, explore the following themes which appear to fall directly within the Terms of Reference:

### **1) The ability of centralised virtual health services to help shift care from hospitals to homes**

Technical innovations, along with changing patient expectations, provide an opportunity to substitute or augment many of the health services delivered in hospitals today. Care delivered in the home and coordinated virtually not only improves equity for patients who may otherwise be unable to access care, but as the evidence continues to demonstrate, clinical outcomes are consistent, if not improved. Care delivery may also be more cost effective, particularly in the long term due to the reduced reliance on physical infrastructure.

There are many examples where virtual care is building the capacity of the health system and improving access and outcomes for patients. Examples include the My Home Hospital acute virtual hospital service in South Australia (delivered by Calvary-Amplar Health Joint Venture Pty Ltd on behalf of SA Health) which saved more than 19,000 bed days last financial year, and RPA virtual delivered by Sydney Local Health District.

There is a considerable opportunity to leverage the technical, clinical, and operational investments made in these proven virtual care models. Centralising and scaling existing services to additional jurisdictions where they can be localised can create operational efficiencies, and reduce duplication of investment and effort.

Australia is one of the slowest adopters in the OECD of new care-settings for acute care designed around the patient. This is despite a growing body of evidence that these models are cost effective and deliver good outcomes when patients are appropriately selected. We encourage NSW to aspire to become an international leader in home-based care, and to take steps to accelerate the rate of adoption. We suggest that this be supported by targeted policy adjustments, capital investment and dedicated funding. The focus should be on advancing both virtual and at home care for acute and rehabilitation episodes. A fundamental shift of care away from large acute hospitals and towards alternative cost effective and patient-centred care settings whenever possible is needed to improve health system sustainability.

The Inquiry should consider the benefits of a centralised virtual hospital in the NSW public system (similar to MyHome Hospital).

## **2) Collaboration with primary care**

A strong primary care system is critical to the sustainability of the acute care system. There are too many examples in NSW where poor access to primary care has flow through impacts for acute care, particularly public hospital emergency departments.

Collaborative commissioning in NSW has been a leading initiative nationally, bringing together primary and acute systems to operate as one health system, but there is much more work to be done. Fragmentation and silos are inherent where Commonwealth and State funding and priorities are misaligned, creating barriers to access, inefficiencies, and poor patient experiences.

This is no more evident than in the mental health space, where poor integration between services places an unnecessary burden on consumers to retell their story over and over to find a service that matches with their eligibility and availability. As a provider of acute mental health triage in NSW, Amplar Health recognises the importance of collaboration between primary and acute care teams.

The Inquiry should consider the potential flow down benefits of further collaborative commissioning and alignment of objectives between primary and acute care delivery.

## **3) Shared investment in prevention**

The greatest threat to health system sustainability is our ageing and chronically unwell population. Australia is lagging in its investment in preventative health as a proportion of overall health spending. Although there is an acknowledgement and commitment to increase the proportionate investment outlined in the National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2023, too often this long-term investment is de-prioritised to fund more immediate health system challenges.

Investment in healthier communities is economically sensible and beneficial to public and private health funders alike. Amplar Health continues to invest in the development and delivery of evidence-based health prevention programs, leveraging the latest technical innovations internationally to deliver cost-effective solutions with measurable benefits.

For more than a decade, we've developed and delivered programs to consumers with chronic disease to with the aim of improving their health outcomes and reducing hospitalisation. Medibank



currently offers a suite of 9 preventative health programs, supporting customers with osteoarthritis, diabetes, coronary artery disease and mental health issues. In FY23, 16,000 of our customers were enrolled in one or more program, not only helping customers to be healthier, reducing key risk factors such as weight and supporting increased physical activity, but also taking pressure off our health system, saving the equivalent of around 55,000 hospital bed days.

The Inquiry should consider the benefits of investing in preventative health initiatives for the long-term sustainability of the health system.

Amplar Health appreciates the broad terms of reference and the ambition of the Inquiry. Relating to the above themes, we encourage a focus on funding models and how they can be designed to place more value on the outcomes and experiences of patients.

Amplar Health welcomes the opportunity to make further contributions to the Inquiry through interviews and roundtable discussions.

## About Us

Driven by a desire to make health care more personal, we co-create health solutions with government, businesses and not-for-profit organisations to deliver on our vision of the best health and wellbeing for Australia.

For over 30 years we've been providing a range of health care services. Driven by a desire to make health care more personal, we listen to the health needs of people in Australia and our partners to co-create programs that aim to improve both partner and patient experiences.

At Amplar Health, we aim to be an inclusive, positive change-maker for the health sector and our community. By championing greater access, choice and control for people in Australia when it comes to managing their health, we believe we can drive this positive change because no two health journeys are the same.

Amplar Health is a business of Medibank Health Solutions Pty Ltd and part of Medibank Group. It brings together Amplar Home Health Pty Ltd (formerly Home Support Services Pty Ltd), Amplar Virtual Health (a business of Medibank Health Solutions Telehealth Pty Ltd), Amplar Allied Health (a business of HealthStrong Pty Ltd) and Integrated Care Services Pty Ltd, provider of the CareComplete suite of programs.