



NACCHO

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

Media Release

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COAG initiatives welcomed

Dr Mick Adams, chair of NACCHO, the peak body for Aboriginal medical services says he is pleased with the steps the federal government is taking so far to address Aboriginal people's health inequality.

"The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Communique outlined a number of initiatives that build on recent announcements such as the Prime Minister's commitment last week of \$19m over three years to assist mentoring, training and recruitment of indigenous people in the health sector" Dr Adams said.

The Government said the initiative announced last week will:

- support the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association to expand its work of mentoring and networking young Indigenous doctors;
- support the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Indigenous Nurses to expand its network of mentoring Indigenous nurses;
- support the Aboriginal community controlled health sector to encourage Indigenous people and students to join the Indigenous health workforce;
- provide additional training opportunities for Aboriginal Health Workers, and support for the establishment of a National Aboriginal Health Worker Association; and
- support the Leaders in Indigenous Medical Education Network to ensure that Indigenous health is expanded into the curriculum in medical, allied health and nursing schools.

"COAG has now committed to boost the number of training places for health professionals including Aboriginal Health Workers by up to an additional 50,000 places over three years.

"This will go some way in the long term to addressing staff shortages in the health sector and hopefully, specifically in the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs) sector where recruitment and retention of staff is an on going problem.

"We hope a further measure to be included in the budget will be additional funding for our sector so we can offer more competitive salaries to attract professional staff.

"I also welcome the commitment to specifically include dental services identified for Aboriginal people under new Commonwealth Dental Health Program. It should ensure this long neglected area of health care for the most disadvantaged is improved.

"Over all the Government and COAG has set up an ambitious indigenous and health reform agenda that will benefit Aboriginal peoples if it maintains its momentum" Dr Adams said.

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