

Communication Strategy *2023–2025*



November 2022

General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration (GPMHSC)

The General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration (GPMHSC) is a multidisciplinary body managed by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and is funded by the Commonwealth Government under the Better Access to Psychiatrist, Psychologist and General Practitioners through the MBS (Better Access initiative).

The GPMHSC includes representatives from the RACGP, the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP), the Australian Psychological Society (APS), and a carer representative and a consumer representative nominated through Mental Health Australia (MHA).

For more information, visit the [GPMHSC website](#).

Mission statement

The GPMHSC works to achieve optimal mental health and wellbeing for the Australian population, by implementing a multidisciplinary approach to education, policy and advocacy, and by supporting GPs to deliver quality primary mental health care.

This Communication Strategy was prepared by The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) in accordance with the Standard Grant Agreement (SGA) between the Commonwealth of Australia (represented by the Department of Health) and the RACGP, relating to the General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration (GPMHSC).

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National Communication Strategy

1.1 Communication objectives

1. Promote the **uptake** of professional development in mental health by GPs
2. Promote the development of **quality** GPMHSC-accredited courses
3. Increase the **recognition** of the GPMHSC
4. Continue the **advocacy** for the role of the GP in providing primary mental health care.

1.2 Communication goals

The purpose of a communication strategy is to contribute to, and facilitate, changes in behaviour. The GPMHSC has identified three overarching behavioural goals that are the basis of the communications strategy and are capable of achieving the objectives of the GPMHSC.

<p><i>Uptake</i></p> <p>To promote the value of further professional development in mental health to GPs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To increase the uptake of MHST (Primary Pathway). 2. To promote the uptake of MHST (Modular Pathway). 3. To promote the value and benefits of being a registered GP provider of FPS. 4. To promote the uptake of mental health MBS item numbers.
<p><i>Quality improvement</i></p> <p>To promote the GPMHSC's commitment to improve Australia's primary mental health system.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To increase the number of GPMHSC-accredited mental health courses. 2. To promote the 2023–25 Mental health training standards. 3. To promote the release of mental health resources for GPs. 4. To communicate the importance of reviewing GPMHTPs in relation to continuity of care and achieving the best outcomes for consumers and carers.
<p><i>Recognition</i></p> <p>Broad awareness and understanding of the role of GPMHSC.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To raise the profile of GPMHSC in Australia's mental health system by promoting the work of the GPMHSC. 2. To increase the number of subscribers to the GPMHSC newsletter. 3. To promote the GPMHSC website.
<p><i>Advocacy</i></p> <p>Broad awareness and understanding of the role of GPMHSC.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To raise the profile of GPs trained in MHST and FPS ST. 2. To increase collaboration between GPs and other mental health care providers. 3. To contribute to the development of policies relating to general practice and mental health.

1.3 Target audience

Internal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPMHSC Committee members and their representative organisations • ACRRM Professional Development Program staff • RACGP CPD national and state faculties • RACGP Policy, Practice and Innovation (PPI) • National Faculty of Specific Interests Group (RACGP) • National Rural Faculty (RACGP) • National Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (RACGP)
External
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ GPs in training/registrar ◦ Experienced GPs ◦ International Medical Graduates • Mental health training providers • Commonwealth Department of Health (DoH) • Primary Health Networks (PHNs) • Mental health organisations

1.4 Effective communication

Effective communication relies on four key building blocks that are relevant to the needs of all of the target audience.

The four key elements are:

1. Dialogue through appropriate platforms and channels

The GPMHSC must be able to communicate in a way that attracts attention from the intended audience and achieves the intended impact. This involves communicating to the target audience in their familial environment. Information must be timely and accurate. The GPMHSC must also be able to adapt the message to ensure relevancy over time.

2. Dissemination of information that caters for specific audiences

The GPMHSC acknowledges that there is no single approach to communication that is likely to reach all of the target audiences and achieve all of the desired outcomes. Effective communication strategies employ a variety of means. The effectiveness of messages being understood and affected depends on the type and number of channels used to communicate them.

3. Providing appropriate support to enable key stakeholders to respond appropriately

The GPMHSC strives to provide easy access to upcoming GP mental health training, resources and other updates in primary mental health. This includes information that is readily available to the target audience when needed.

4. Broad environmental support for change

This involves ensuring the community and the policy environment is informed to support positive change. In line with the SGA, the GPMHSC will strive to achieve this by becoming an 'active voice' and contributing to the development of policies in the general practice and mental health.

1.5 Activities for the 2023–25 CPD triennium

The following work is dependent on DoH funding:

FPS training subsidy for GPs

- The GPMHSC currently offers a partial subsidy of \$600 for GPs who complete FPS training and go on to register as FPS providers.
- A full subsidy would likely encourage more GPs to undertake the training.

Training provider grants for FPS ST

- There is a need for more FPS ST courses.
- Currently, we offer grants to training providers to develop online FPS ST. We propose extending this to include face-to-face training
- The last two years has seen an increase in the availability of online training, in part thanks to GPMHSC grants, but we expect more face-to-face workshops will need to become available for the new triennium.

FPS mentorship program

- Funding to ensure program continues for the next funding period
- Survey responses by mentors and mentees so far has been positive.
- In addition, we could explore an extension of the mentorship program, that will assist mentees to receive guidance and support after their one-on-one mentoring sessions have finished. This could be in the form of establishing and co-facilitating peer group learning (PGL) for GPs
- PGL is the preferred format for GPs to complete their FPS CPD requirements, ensuring they maintain their FPS registration with Medicare.

Training provider engagement

With the commitment to further funding, the GPMHSC will investigate and conduct a renewed approach to engaging training providers under the GPMHSC accreditation scheme. This will include promotion of the GPMHSC Standards, the accreditation icons with training providers and GPs and the further development of the number of available mental health courses.

Promotion of the alternative accreditation for GPMHSC Gold Standard CPD will also be a focus to encourage MH and FPS CPD training providers to genuinely involve consumer and carers in accredited courses.

Consumer and carer engagement

The GPMHSC will also look to increasing the prominence of consumer and carer representation within education activities with a support package resource that would aim to provide information on what these vital stakeholders should expect from working with GPs, such as what questions may arise within consultations as well as after the event.

Social media

The GPMHSC will continue to improve and maintain strong social media presence, aimed at promoting the uptake of MHST, mental health-related MBS items (including telehealth) and the value and benefits of upskilling as GP providers of FPS.

The GPMHSC will also continue to update and review our social media promotions and explore new opportunities to promote the uptake of MBS mental health items under the Better Access initiative.

Website

The Standards release followed the launch of the new [GPMHSC website](#), designed to promote the work and resources of the Collaboration, ensure clarity for GPs around eligibility for MBS item numbers and encourage training providers to develop more activities according the GPMHSC Standards.

A valuable resource for GPs, GP registrars, PHNs, Training Providers, government representatives and other stakeholders interested in GP mental health education and training, the GPMHSC website highlights the quality of information it holds and the successful collaborative efforts.

Newsletter

The GPMHSC will continue to promote courses and resources through its quarterly newsletters. Focus will be on building the distribution list to ensure we maximise the number of GPs who receive primary mental health care information and resources. Key to this list-building will be signing up interested stakeholders, attending conferences and promoting the GPMHSC via social media channels.

Conferences

Conferences will continue to be an important part of the National Communications Strategy.

Exhibiting at conferences, either face-to-face or through a virtual method, is an effective way for the GPMHSC to establish contact with industry professionals in the primary care sector and disseminate information to key stakeholders. During these conferences, information is provided about the GPMHSC, pathways to registration as a provider of mental health services, the benefits of mental health training, relevant courses, and the Better Access initiative.

During the 2023–25 CPD triennium, the Secretariat will promote the work of the GPMHSC at the following flag-ship conferences:

- WONCA23
- RACGP GP

- ACRRM's Rural Medicine Australia (RMA).

Sponsorship of conferences and other events raises the public profile of the GPMHSC, providing a platform to bring information about mental health training activities to a new audience.

Increased collaboration with the sector

The GPMHSC has a key role in bridging knowledge with PHNs about GPs and primary mental health care. The GPMHSC has the expertise, experience and ability to support engagement in a sustained and meaningful way. Activities may include:

- identifying and implementing strategies through working with PHNs to improve access to mental health care
- Webinars to increase PHN knowledge on reviewing GP skill sets and participation in professional development relating to mental health.

Updating key resources

The GPMHSC produces a number of guides and resources for GPs. for promotional purposes. During the 2023–25 CPD triennium, the GPMHSC Secretariat will work to update key resources on:

- [*Suicide prevention and first aid: A guide for GPs*](#)
- [*After suicide: A guide for GPs*](#)
- [*Practice guide: Communication between medical and mental health professionals*](#)
- [*Working with the Stepped Care Model*](#)

The GPMHSC will also consider developing resource packs aimed at educating GPs on the unique mental health needs for specific populations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, CALD, LGBTQI+, Refugees and Veterans). This could include information on specific referral and support services, as well as a list of suggested prompts to guide GPs when conducting a mental health assessment.

Target audience

Internal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACRRM Professional Development Program staff • RACGP QI&CPD national and state faculties • National Rural Faculty (RACGP) • National Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (RACGP) • National Faculty of Specific Interests 	
External	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Experienced GPs • Mental health training providers • Primary Health Networks 	

1.6 Communication strategy Objective 1

Promote the uptake of professional development in mental health by GPs

Communication Goal	Audience	Communication Tools	Measuring Success
To increase the uptake of MHST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPs in training • Other doctors entering Australian general practice (eg International Medical Graduates) • General practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference exhibitions • Conference presentations • GPMHSC website • GPMHSC newsletter • Social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continual increase in the GP uptake of MHST.
To promote the uptake of FPS ST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPs in training • GPs with an interest in mental health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference exhibitors • Conference presentations • GPMHSC website • GPMHSC newsletter • Social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continual increase in GP uptake of FPS ST • Reported continual increase in number of GPs who complete FPS ST and have gone on to register as FPS providers.
Promote the uptake of mental health MBS items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPs • GP registrars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference exhibitors • Conference presentations • Sponsorship opportunities • GPMHSC website • GPMHSC newsletter • Social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported uptake of mental health-related MBS item numbers
To promote the value and benefits of being a registered GP provider of FPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop presentations • Emails • Meetings • Official Correspondence • FPS ST Video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased messaging across faculty and PDP communications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced GPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference exhibitors • Conference presentations • GPMHSC website • GPMHSC newsletter • Social media • FPS ST Video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported uptake of FPS ST by GPs • Completion of an FPS CPD course as a requirement to maintain FPS registration
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health training providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference exhibitors • Conference presentations • GPMHSC website • GPMHSC newsletter • FPS ST Video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New FPS ST courses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Health Networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-blasts • Mailouts • FPS ST Video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased inquiry from PHNs

1.7 Communication strategy Objective 2

Promote the development of quality GPMHSC accredited mental health courses

Communication Goal	Audience	Communication Tools	Measuring Success
To increase the number of mental health courses accredited by the GPMHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Health Networks Training provider organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conference exhibitors Conference presentations GPMHSC website GPMHSC newsletter Social media External stakeholder communications GPMHSC Video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of available GPMHSC-accredited mental health training activities increases from the previous triennium An increased number of MH CPD and FPS CPD accredited with the GPMHSC
To promote the 2023–25 Mental health training standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Health Networks Training provider organisations GPs IMGs Registrars Medical students ACRRM Department of Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conference exhibitors Conference presentations GPMHSC website GPMHSC newsletter Social media External stakeholder communications GPMHSC Video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of the GP and training provider guides of the 2023–25 Mental health training standards
To promote the release of other primary mental healthcare resources as developed by the GPMHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Health Networks Training provider organisations GPs IMGs Registrars Medical students ACRRM Government staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conference exhibitors Conference presentations GPMHSC website GPMHSC newsletter Social media External stakeholder communications GPMHSC Video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of other primary mental healthcare standards and resources, including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPs working in rural and remote locations GPs working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples GPs working with refugee populations Suicide prevention
To communicate the importance of reviewing GPMHTPs in the continuity of care and achieving the best outcomes for consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPs Registrars IMGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conference exhibitors Conference presentations GPMHSC website GPMHSC newsletter Social media External stakeholder communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the usage of MBS item numbers 2712 (review of a patient's mental health care plan)

1.8 Communication strategy Objective 3

Broad awareness and understanding of the role of GPMHSC

Communication Goal	Audience	Communication Tools	Measuring Success
To raise the profile of GPMHSC in Australia's mental health system by promoting the work of the GPMHSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Health Networks Training provider organisations GPs IMGs Registrars Medical students Policy, Practice & Innovation staff (RACGP) Other departments of the RACGP Mental health stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conference exhibitors Conference presentations Sponsorship opportunities GPMHSC website GPMHSC newsletter Social media External stakeholder communications GPMHSC Video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPMHSC is recognised as a prominent 'leader' in the primary mental health sector GPMHSC is consulted and invited to numerous government and mental health sector inquiries for feedback and advice
To increase the number of subscribers to the GPMHSC newsletter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Health Networks Training provider organisations GPs IMGs Registrars Medical students Mental health stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conference exhibitors Conference presentations GPMHSC website Printed materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of newsletter subscribers increases by at least 30% over three-years (target of 10% per year).
Promote the GPMHSC website and contact phone number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Health Networks Training provider organisations GPs IMGs Registrars Medical students Mental health stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotional items GPMHSC Video GPMHSC website GPMHSC newsletter External stakeholder communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported continual increase in the number of visitors to the GPMHSC website Reported continual increase in the number of phone calls directed to the GPMHSC Secretariat

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