

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services



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BETTER CARE FOR PATIENTS, MORE SUPPORT FOR GPs

The Andrews Labor Government is giving Victorians more options than ever to get the healthcare they need, with the opening of the state's first new Priority Primary Care Centre (PPCC) – as well as giving GPs more support to provide critical primary healthcare, with a vital new role to better connect our health system.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today visited the PPCC in Epping – the first of the Labor Government's 25 new centres opening across the state over the coming months.

The centres will give Victorian families another option to get free healthcare, close to home – and will play a major part in easing the record demand on busy emergency departments as a result of the pandemic.

Operating for extended hours to suit busy families, the new centres are equipped to handle conditions like fractures and burns. Patients will be able to access the services free of charge, whether they have a Medicare card or not.

Victoria and NSW are each establishing 25 centres, bringing the number of services across both states to 50 – providing faster care for urgent but non-critical conditions and saving families time and stress.

The opening of the first PPCC comes as the Labor Government creates a new specialised position to strengthen the relationship between primary care and hospitals and embed more general practice knowledge in the Department of Health.

A new Chief GP Adviser will drive a program of work designed to better support General Practice and improve connections between primary care and public hospitals by:

- Supporting the state's investment in general practice and primary care
- Assisting with better patient flow, including in aged care and disability care
- Working with the Chief Surgical Adviser on patient pathways to surgery
- Supporting continued consultation between the Department of the Health and the GP sector
- Working with the Commonwealth to bolster general Practice and primary care, and advocating for continued Commonwealth investment

An appointment process for the inaugural Chief GP Adviser will start in the coming weeks in consultation with the sector, including the Australian Medical Association and the Royal College of General Practitioners.

The new role comes in addition to more than \$128 million the Labor Government has invested in primary care – including the creation of 28 state-run GP respiratory clinics and the Virtual ED, operated by Northern Health, which is providing telehealth care to thousands of patients to reduce pressure on GPs and emergency departments.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"Having the first of our Priority Primary Care Centres open is a huge boost to the system – taking pressure off local GPs and EDs and providing more options for patients in the northern suburbs."

"The creation of the new Chief GP Adviser role is a fantastic initiative which will result in more support for GPs through increased support for regional doctors and better connections between hospitals and primary care."

"The former Morrison government spent almost a decade slashing our primary care system – and Matthew Guy's Liberals will do exactly the same thing if given the chance. Only Labor will step in to properly invest in the healthcare every Victorian deserves."

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