

Documentation capture, Healthcare AI

How Australian healthcare practices can prepare for the government's 10-year primary care plan

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The Australian Government's 10-year plan for primary care is set to make major changes in the delivery of modern healthcare services, addressing some of the most pressing challenges in healthcare practices today. But to deliver on its objectives, healthcare leaders will need to explore how they can support their clinicians with innovative technologies. Here we take a closer look at the government's plan and how you can start making meaningful changes in your practice today.

Primary care is the first port of call for millions of Australian citizens, and healthcare professionals play a crucial role in many patients' lives in communities across the country.

But like most healthcare systems, Australia's primary care network isn't without its challenges. Anyone working in the sector will be all too aware of the rising demand for healthcare services, which is at odds with limited clinician resources and a growing incidence of clinician burnout. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

To respond to these challenges, the Australian Government has launched a ten-year plan for primary care improvement—but it'll require a lot of change from healthcare practices. Here's a closer look at what the plan involves and how you can start preparing.

Addressing age-old challenges in Australia's primary care network

Launched in 2022, the [Australian Government's primary health care 10-year plan](#) sets out to make some big changes over the next decade. The government is pushing to improve people's experience of care, the health of populations, the cost-efficiency of the health system, and the working lives of healthcare professionals.

These are all aims that many healthcare practices have been working towards for years. But this renewed, nationwide focus will place additional pressure on government bodies to actively support these changes.

The government's more directed objectives are closely linked to some of the most pressing challenges in Australian primary care today. For example, one objective is to improve the safety and quality of healthcare services—which will mean addressing the [wellbeing of clinicians](#) to protect them from burnout and help them dedicate more time to their patients.

Similarly, as the government aims to expand access to healthcare services in underrepresented communities, healthcare practices will need to free up their clinicians' time to deal with the increase in demand. Healthcare practices will also need to explore how they can recruit new healthcare talent and retain existing healthcare professionals in the industry.

Key recommendations that offer a way forward

One thing that unites all these aims is that they'll require healthcare practices to embrace technology in their clinicians' workflows in smart new ways. And many practices are already starting to explore these possibilities today, following some of the government's Primary Health Reform Steering Group's recommendations.

Ahead of releasing the 10-year plan, the group recommended that healthcare practices should start working towards building workforce capabilities and sustainability, and improving their digital infrastructure.

Building workforce capabilities and sustainability involves targeting common sources of friction, such as heavy documentation workloads, to free clinicians to focus on more valuable tasks. Meanwhile improving digital infrastructure will require healthcare practices to expand the support for clinicians and introduce more streamlined tools for documentation and digital record keeping.

These are both challenges we've been working on with healthcare practices throughout Australia in recent years. Using our conversational AI workflow assistant and documentation companion, [Dragon Medical One](#), we've been helping practices create easier and more productive documentation experiences for their clinicians.

How speech recognition supports primary care

Speech recognition solutions like Dragon Medical One give clinicians a chance to tackle their ever-growing documentation workloads up to three times faster than typing—all while improving the level of detail in their reporting.

And with faster, more accurate reporting, the technology is also helping practices improve the quality of service that their patients receive. For example, Dr Kevin Naicker from Michigan Drive Medical Practice in Queensland shared how Dragon Medical One has helped him dedicate more time to his patients: "Dragon Medical One has really revolutionised my practice. During a consultation, I can have a more fruitful conversation and experience with my patient—I don't need to worry about typing notes. I can dictate my notes straight after the patient leaves and it only takes me a couple of minutes."

Improvements like these will give healthcare practices the chance to reduce their costs and free up more resources, building greater capacity to care for Australia's underserved communities. And crucially, these improvements also give clinicians the chance to rebalance their personal and professional lives—and reduce their chance of burnout.

An ambitious decade of collaboration and improvement

ahead

Of course, one solution won't solve all the challenges in Australia's primary care system. It'll require close collaboration between healthcare practices, government bodies, and technology providers to create meaningful changes throughout the primary care network.

We've unpacked the 10-year plan further and explored some of the most pressing challenges in primary care today in our recent guide, [How Australian primary care can thrive in a decade of change](#).

In the guide, you'll find an expert perspective on the barriers healthcare practices will need to overcome over the next decade—and a closer look at some of the solutions that will be crucial in achieving the goals set by the government.

Tags: [Dragon Medical One](#), [Future of healthcare](#), [Clinical documentation](#), [Patient Outcomes](#), [Physician Wellness](#), [Primary Care](#), [Quality of Care](#)



About Dr. Simon Wallace

Dr. Simon Wallace is the Chief Clinical Information Officer (CCIO) of Nuance's Healthcare division in the UK and Ireland. Simon has worked as a GP, hospital and public health doctor in Brighton and London. His interest in health informatics began in the 90s when he spent a year at the King's Fund investigating the impact of the internet on shared decision making between patients and their healthcare professional. For the past 15 years, he has worked for a range of organisations including Bupa, Dr Foster, Cerner Corporation and GSK across a range of technologies which include electronic patient records, telemedicine, mobile health and lifestyle devices. Simon has a keen interest in the voluntary sector, recently completing a 7 year term as a Trustee for Fitzrovia Youth in Action, a children and young people's charity based in London.

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