On Friday 12 October, General Practice Queensland (GPQ) hosted the second Health Leaders Forum for 2012. The forum provided a unique opportunity to bring together over 180 representatives from key organisations critical to the provision of healthcare, including Hospital and Health Services, Medicare Locals, General Practice Networks and other primary health care and community organisations. The aim was to provide attendees with the latest information and to generate discussion and debate about how together we can foster a high performing integrated health system to improve the health outcomes of all Queenslanders.

**Session 1 - Translating national health reform initiatives into local activity with improved health service performance**

Session 1 provided some important messages which framed the discussion for the remainder of the day. GPQ Board Chair, Dr Dilip Dhupelia, set the scene during his welcoming speech, acknowledging the changing landscape in Queensland.

The opening address by the Honourable Lawrence Springborg provided a timely reminder that “health is a privilege and opportunity that fundamentally touches every aspect of a human’s life”. Minister Springborg pledged a commitment to achieving improved patient outcomes in Queensland through collaboration, innovation and integration, which will be driven by system change, a comprehensive evidence base, lean thinking and investing in and encouraging human capital.

Ms Diane Watson, CEO of the National Health Performance Authority, closed the first session, delivering a passionate presentation focused on the importance of data in decision making for health service planners, clinicians and consumers alike. The importance of consumer perspectives in influencing the improvement of service outcomes was fundamental to her presentation, as was the need for good quality information that is locally relevant, comparable, useful and insightful.

**Session 2 – Integrating primary health care and health services to achieve a shared health agenda**

Two successful service integration initiatives were presented, followed by an overview of the challenges and opportunities for successful health service integration from the perspective of providers. Clinical leadership and a massive cultural shift, driven by community and consumer expectations, and supported by access to relevant and reliable data, were identified as critical enablers to breaking down barriers between services and achieving true integration.

**Session 3 - Exploring the importance of clinical leadership and engagement in a high performing health system**

In the third session speakers highlighted the importance of clinical leadership to enable system change and the importance of conveying the benefits of system reform to clinicians to achieve buy in. Appropriate engagement of clinicians to drive systemic and operational changes will result in efficiencies and cost effectiveness within the health system and foster the positive cultural changes required to achieve seamless communication and service delivery.

**Session 4 – Young Clinical Leaders’ Panel**

The Young Clinical Leaders’ Panel provided panel members with an opportunity to present their vision for the future of the healthcare system, posing the question – “How will we know we have achieved a high performing integrated health system?” A range of varying perspectives from up and coming clinical leaders resulted in a robust discussion around the importance of technology, communication, and workforce planning and development in achieving a truly integrated health system in the future. Clinical and political leadership were identified as key enablers to achieving this vision.
Key themes

- **Leadership** – Clinical and political leadership is essential to drive changes at a system level. This will require the identification of visionary leaders with a passion for better outcomes for consumers.

- **Collaboration** – Horizontal and vertical collaboration is required across the sector to achieve integration between public and private, state and federal, clinical and non-clinical services.

- **Consumer focus** – Consumer perspectives are a powerful mechanism for driving change, and consumers must be provided with sufficient relevant information to inform decisions and contribute to quality improvement processes. A focus on providing the best possible care and enhancing the patient journey is paramount to health system change.

- **Workforce** – As the foundation of our healthcare system, significant investment in the health workforce is essential in securing the future of our health system. Consideration of workforce and succession planning, professional development, and strategies to engage young clinicians is essential. It is also important to invest in recruitment and professional development of support staff as a critical element of the health system.

- **Technology** – Technology will be central to advances in health care in the future. Significant investment into technology is required for the purposes of communication, information sharing, data collection, development of an evidence base, and health service delivery.

- **Culture** – Development of a shared understanding and shared language between sectors and service providers is essential to integration and collaboration. This will require a cultural shift that fosters professional trust and understanding.

**Preview of GPQ2 and launch of foundation member campaign**

The day closed with the preview of GPQ2 and the launch of our Foundation Member Campaign. The launch and creation of CheckUP is a particularly significant milestone, as it will mark the final stage of GPQ’s transition to a truly independent, not-for-profit industry body dedicated to advancing primary health care. The transition to CheckUP will be completed by 1 January 2013. Forum delegates were invited to join CheckUP as a Foundation Member, with member benefits commencing from January 2013.

**Where to from here?**

GPQ looks forward to opportunities to encourage collaboration between key players in the health industry, resulting in networks that promote sharing of best practice and foster innovation to ensure it is readily accessible to all. Sector capacity will be increased through workforce planning and inter-professional development, enabling innovative and practical system wide solutions.

The Forum feedback has been really positive and we look forward to further opportunities to continue the dialogue and build upon the learnings at the next Health Leaders Forum, 19 April 2013.

*Thank you to our Principal Partner*

*Queensland Health*

*Through collaboration, innovation and leadership, GPQ is committed to building a robust, effective primary healthcare system.*