ATLAS SHINES A LIGHT ON HEALTHCARE VARIATION

NPS MedicineWise welcomes the release today of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care’s Australian Atlas of Healthcare Variation.

Chief Executive Dr Lynn Weekes says that the atlas is key to helping build understanding of variations in clinical practice and identifying opportunities to improve quality of healthcare for Australians. The atlas provides a snapshot of variation that can then be further explored locally to better understand if that variation is cause for concern or if it can be explained by clinical or social factors.

“It is pleasing to see that many of the areas listed in the atlas have already been identified as priorities by healthcare practitioners, governments and health organisations like NPS MedicineWise,” says Dr Weekes.

“The granularity in the atlas gives a clearer picture of what is actually happening in practice and across different settings and locations, and reinforces the need to continue efforts across the sector to support delivery of quality care in line with best practice and contemporary evidence.”

The inaugural atlas is an important step towards understanding variation in practice and is synergistic to current reviews, reforms and initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the healthcare system, like the MBS Review and Choosing Wisely Australia®.

While the atlas adds to the knowledge base, there is more work to be done to identify unwarranted variation and where work is underway in order to avoid unnecessary duplication.

“Choosing Wisely Australia, which launched in April 2015, has already begun to look at some of the healthcare areas listed in the atlas after these were identified by clinicians as needing attention,” says Dr Weekes.

“There has also been considerable investment by government in programs and interventions to improve quality of practice, including utilisation of medicines and medical tests in different settings, and the atlas itself.

“We congratulate the Commission on the first atlas as an important step towards understanding and addressing unwarranted variation and improving healthcare for Australians.”

ENDS

About Choosing Wisely

Choosing Wisely Australia® is enabling clinicians, consumers and healthcare stakeholders to start important conversations about tests, treatments and procedures where evidence shows they provide no benefit and in some cases, lead to harm. The campaign is being led by Australia’s medical colleges and societies and is facilitated by NPS MedicineWise.

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Independent, evidence-based and not-for-profit, NPS MedicineWise enables better decisions about medicines and medical tests. We receive funding from the Australian Government Department of Health.