

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) has today awarded the 2023 Deeble Institute Fellowship to Associate Professor Reema Harrison, Lead Healthcare Engagement and Workplace Behaviour, Australian Institute of Health Innovation, Macquarie University.

Named in honour of Professor John Deeble AO (1931-2018), health economist, co-architect of Medicare, founding director of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and namesake of the Deeble Institute for Health Policy Research (AHHA); the Fellowship has been awarded to an outstanding mid-career researcher whose research commitment reflects Professor Deeble's legacy of universal healthcare through affordable, quality healthcare for all.

'Associate Professor Harrison is a worthy recipient of the Deeble Institute Fellowship 2023, recognising her commitment to engaging diverse populations in research in order to improve equitable access to health services and outcomes', says Chief Executive AHHA Kylie Woolcock.

Reema is a well-respected leader in health systems and policy research, designing and publishing instruments to assess clinician and patient experiences of health care for government and scientific communities.

During the course of her Fellowship, Associate Professor Harrison will examine voluntary patient registration reforms and equitable access to healthcare.

Voluntary patient registration has been proposed as a mechanism to formally link patients to primary health care and practices.

Announced in the recent Federal Budget, the MyMedicare program, introduces a voluntary patient registration option for patients that aims to promote continuity of care that will better meet patients' needs.

'While the potential for this reform to improve equity of access has been acknowledged, it is not yet well understood,' says Ms Woolcock.

'Marginalised groups in Australia often experience health inequity and understanding the holistic needs of populations as part of MyMedicare will be critical to driving improvements in the health outcomes of all Australians.

'In principle, voluntary patient registration will support primary care to provide more integrated, timely, continuous, and coordinated care but in practice, how this will best support universal access to care is unknown.'

What we do know is that this will require collaboration across the health system, bringing a shared purpose and culture across multiple disciplines – clinical, financial, operational, management and informatics. Together we must provide greater accountability to improve access for those patients with the greatest needs.

The online version of this [media release](#) on the AHHA website.

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) is the independent peak membership body and advocate for the Australian healthcare system and a national voice for universally accessible, high-quality healthcare in Australia.

Media enquiries: Kylie Woolcock, Chief Executive, AHHA

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The 2023 Deeble Institute Fellowship is supported by Capital Health Network, the ACT's Primary Health Network.

For more information regarding the Deeble Fellowship, you can contact the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association by emailing admin@ahha.asn.au, or phoning +61 2 6162 0780.

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