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# Door opens on resolving the impasse in primary care funding talks



Fiona Cassie

fcassie@nzdoctor.co.nz

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All parties want to get primary care funding talks back under way, says General Practice Leaders Forum chair Samantha Murton

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General practice representatives are working on a proposal to get the stalled primary care funding talks restarted.

The talks have been in limbo since June last year over a dispute about who represents general practice owners under the PSAAP (PHO Services Agreement Amendment Protocol) process. Pressure is mounting for PSAAP talks to resume before the annual 1 July capitation increase is set.

**‘Everyone wants to get under way’**

Samantha Murton, chair of the General Practice Leaders Forum, says forum members last Friday discussed how to get the protocol under way while recognising the flawed PSAAP process needed improving.

She says the forum's Contracted Provider Caucus is to come back to the forum within the next two weeks with a proposal for Te Whatu Ora that also ensures a "more fit for purpose way of developing policy and negotiating contracts".

"All of us want it to get under way," says Dr Murton, a specialist GP who is also president of forum member, the RNZCGP.

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## **Positive discussions happening**

Philip Grant, the caucus secretariat and chief executive of caucus member General Practice Owners Association (GenPro), says he is having active and positive discussions, including with Te Whatu Ora, on a proposal for resuming PSAAP.

Mr Grant says the discussions are focused on the immediate need to discuss contractual arrangements for general practice services before the new financial year starts 1 July.

There is also the need to ensure the future PSAAP forum (or similar entity) for contractual discussions “is fit for purpose for the health reforms in the way they are moving forward”.

Mr Grant says the caucus will report back to the forum on the outcomes of those discussions.

## **New protocol disputed**

PSAAP has not met since 1 June 2022, when talks broke down over the then funder agencies' proposed 3 per cent capitation increase for 2022/23.

At that meeting, a new protocol was proposed replacing DHBs with Te Whatu Ora and Te Aka Whai Ora, and continuing with the current PHO and contracted provider appointee process.

At present, the Contracted Provider Caucus – made up of GenPro, RNZCGP and Hauora Taiwhenua Rural Network – appoints two contracted provider agents.

The caucus argues that individual contracted providers should, like individual PHOs, have the right to nominate their own representative agent.

A new protocol is likely to set a precedent for whatever replaces the current PHO Services Agreement process.

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