

Accountability and system improvement

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Accurate, up-to-date and comparable performance data are invaluable tools for individuals and organisations seeking to influence systemic change and achieve improvements in real health outcomes.

Under the National Healthcare Agreement, Australia's governments have committed to ensuring that our health care system provides all Australians with timely access to quality health services based on their needs, not ability to pay, regardless of where they live. These are lofty and admirable aspirations, though the distance from major cities still links closely to poorer health outcomes for many Australians.

The COAG Reform Council has been asked by Heads of Governments to report annually to them and to the public on whether progress is being made by our governments in achieving the health outcomes to which they have agreed to be accountable. This includes overcoming the great disparities in health outcomes between cities and rural/remote areas. This is a unique reporting role, which focuses on the performance of our governments, rather than of clinicians or individual hospitals.

This presentation will discuss:

- what the Council has learned in the first three years of its reporting about the disparity in health outcomes between cities and rural areas
- what data challenges are faced when trying to assess health outcomes in rural and remote Australia
- the importance of the Council's performance reporting to informing advocacy and systemic change.