

Media Release

After hours mental health support for Pilbara region

2 May 2017

WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) is increasing access to mental health care in the Pilbara through a new program to reduce the number of people presenting at emergency departments after hours.

WA Country Health Service (WACHS) and Pilbara Mental Health and Drug Service (PMHDS) has been contracted by WAPHA to employ two after hours clinical nurse specialist mental health liaison staff to work in the Emergency Department Diversion Program.

WAPHA regional coordinator Winny Henry said the creation of these additional roles would provide a strong clinical focus.

“This will include treatment, support and coordination of mental health care to ensure patients and emergency department clinicians are better supported,” Ms Henry said.

“The program will offer targeted face-to-face after-hours mental health care in the emergency department setting.

“Patients presenting with mental health care needs will also receive appropriate referral and follow up, and linkage with other agencies where required.”

Member for Durack Melissa Price said the Federal Government is committed to supporting people experiencing mental health issues in rural and remote areas.

“This is great news for people living in the Pilbara region and provides additional support for health professionals caring for people presenting at emergency departments,” Ms Price said.

Services will be provided at the Hedland Health Campus in South Hedland and Nickol Bay Hospital in Karratha, with regional video conferencing links to inland hospitals in Tom Price, Paraburdoo, Newman and Onslow, as well as Marble Bar and Nullagine Nursing Posts, as required.

Ms Henry said the new roles would have a positive impact on mental health outcomes in the Pilbara.

“WACHS Pilbara currently offers after-hours mental health services through the hospital emergency department, local on-call psychiatrists and via RuralLink,” Ms Henry said.

“This funding will support the work already being done by providing an increased capacity in emergency departments and allow for the support of clients with mental health and alcohol and

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other drug concerns following an emergency department presentation, effectively linking them into appropriate community support services.”

The two positions are funded to the end of June 2018.

ENDS

- WA Primary Health Alliance operates WA's three Primary Health Networks; Perth South, Perth North and Country WA

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