

# Media Release

## Report highlights chronic disease hotspots across Western Australia

16 November 2017

**Recently released report *Lessons of Location: Potentially Preventable Hospitalisation Hotspots in Western Australia* identifies areas in WA where health inequalities are prevalent and, without intervention, likely to continue.**

A collaborative effort between WA Department of Health and WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA), the operator of the State's three Primary Health Networks (PHNs), the report will inform the development of strategies to reduce preventable hospitalisation, mainly through enhanced primary health care services and improved integration between primary care and hospitals.

This is particularly important for conditions which can and should be managed in the primary care setting, such as respiratory diseases, diabetes complications, dental conditions, heart failure and vaccine-preventable illnesses which account for a large number of preventable hospitalisations.

According to the report's authors, *Lessons of Location* provides evidence of the areas within WA that constantly recorded rates of potentially preventable hospitalisation (PPH) that were higher than the State average. PPHs accounted for approximately six per cent of all hospitalisations from 2010-14 and cost \$352 million per year.

The report introduces a method of identifying small geographical areas where health inequalities are entrenched and, without intervention, are likely to endure.

Federal Member for Durack, Melissa Price says ensuring people in WA receive safe, high-quality, accessible and appropriate health care is a priority.

"WA is a geographically diverse state and we need to come up with targeted solutions for individual places. One size-fits-all will not work.

"It is important we apply a collective approach to addressing our state's health needs. The findings of this report provide invaluable information and support the case for local, tailored responses," Ms Price said.

WAPHA's general manager Linda Richardson said WAPHA via the three PHNs has a strong commitment to responding to the primary health care needs of local communities, and delivering evidence-based solutions.

"While the rate of admission to hospitals in Western Australia (WA) has stabilised in recent years, it remains high and unsustainable.

“Targeting persistent hotspots alone will not substantially reduce the growing burden of potentially preventable hospitalisations, but it’s an important first step for the WA Government and Primary Health Networks to ensure that all communities get a fair go.

“Together, we are committed to giving some of the most disadvantaged Western Australians the chance to lead healthier, more productive lives as where you live really matters to your chances of a long and healthy life.

“This research supports the work we currently do in identifying priority geographical areas where we can focus our efforts to have a positive impact for those groups who are at greatest risk of poor health outcomes,” Ms Richardson said.

WAPHA is already making progress through commissioning a range of primary care services for people at risk of chronic and acute conditions with a key focus on integration and access.

Integrated Chronic Disease Care teams have been commissioned in each region, helping to improve the coordination of services for people living with chronic conditions, particularly respiratory conditions and diabetes complications.

Diabetes and Chronic Respiratory Disease Telehealth programs have also been rolled out across the state.

“These services will improve access to high quality support and education for people in rural and remote areas, potentially reducing the rate of hospital admissions and helping people to stay healthy within their communities,” Ms Richardson said.

The full report is available at <http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Reports-and-publications>

## ENDS

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**About WAPHA:** WAPHA oversees the strategic commissioning functions of the Perth North, Perth South and Country WA Primary Health Networks (PHNs). The WA PHNs are three of 31 PHNs established by the Australian Government nationally to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for the community. We work across the WA healthcare system with doctors, allied health professionals, Area Health Services and service providers to improve the coordination of care for people who are at risk of poor health outcomes. For more information, visit [www.wapha.org.au](http://www.wapha.org.au)