



WAPHA
WA Primary Health Alliance

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PERTH NORTH, PERTH SOUTH,
COUNTRY WA
An Australian Government Initiative

Media Release

Joined-up health system key to keeping people well in the community

4 August 2017

WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) recognises that deeper partnering and collaboration is needed across the healthcare sector if people with chronic health conditions are to be kept well in the community and out of hospital.

WAPHA acknowledges the central principle of a recent Federal Government proposal to reduce avoidable and costly hospital admissions and readmissions through measures that would channel funding to GPs and allow them to manage patients with chronic conditions in the community setting.

WAPHA chief executive officer Learne Durrington says the primary healthcare system is fragmented with significant access barriers for people trying to navigate the system, particularly those at high risk of poor health outcomes.

“It’s important to recognise the important role of general practice in improving the coordination and management of care for patients to reduce preventable hospital admissions and improve patients’ quality of life and access to appropriate services,” Ms Durrington said.

In WA, 21 per cent of hospital admissions would be “potentially preventable” if patients had received earlier care for their conditions from primary healthcare practitioners, such as GPs. This equates to more than 62,000 admissions a year, or about 170 admissions a day.

“Clearly, there is an opportunity and appetite for Primary Health Networks, of which WAPHA operates all three in WA, to work with primary healthcare providers and the hospital system as stewards of change.

“All health sector agencies have a responsibility to prioritise limited resources and ensure future system improvements are data driven, evidence based and patient focussed.”

“We are fortunate to have a world-class hospital system in WA, but no one wants to or should be in hospital, unless it’s absolutely necessary,” Ms Durrington said.



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WAPHA already works collaboratively with the State Government and WA Department of Health on a number of important initiatives, including the Sustainable Health Review and a report into the factors that influence potentially preventable hospital admissions.

WAPHA initiatives to support GPs and help people stay well in the community include:

- **Integrated primary chronic disease care:** a multi-disciplinary team model with care coordinators supporting GPs and patients with chronic diabetes, cardiology and respiratory conditions to navigate their treatment journey.
- **Integrated primary mental health care:** a stepped care model offering a range of staged treatment options accessed by GPs via a single mental health portal.
- **Strengthening capability and capacity of general practice:** preparing GPs for the introduction of Federal Government initiatives such as Health Care Homes and My Health Record; support with immunisation and cancer screening initiatives.
- **Education:** HealthPathways, an online resource to help GPs navigate the health care system for their patients' chronic conditions.
- **Place based care:** primary health care services designed to meet the needs of a community, taking into account demographic, geographic, social and economic factors.

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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