

## Innovative new service to help some of Perth's most vulnerable people to access healthcare

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**A first of its kind in Western Australia, *Improving Access to Primary Healthcare* is a new service that takes healthcare to homes of some of Perth's more vulnerable people, whether that be a house, hostel or community residential facility.**

WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) has commissioned Ruah Community Services and Silver Chain Group to design and run the new service. It is available to people who are already using their services, and those of Richmond Wellbeing, with chronic conditions whose healthcare needs are not being met elsewhere.

The service sees nurse practitioners work collaboratively with community support providers to build trusted relationships with clients. It recognises the important role nurse practitioners can play in reducing the burden of chronic conditions by ensuring clients have a well-coordinated care plan that also provides continuity of care.

Silver Chain and Ruah carried out extensive consultation with community service organisations and their clients during the design phase, to ensure the service was practical and well suited to the needs of its users.

Federal Member for Swan, Mr Steve Irons, said having primary healthcare and social services working side by side will be key to improving the lives of some of WA's most marginalised people.

"The location is critical to improving access. This fantastic new service is unique in that it offers a flexible approach by providing healthcare in the client's usual place of residence," Mr Irons said.

WAPHA general manager Linda Richardson said the service will give clients a better understanding of their health and greater independence in self-managing their condition with the support of nurse practitioners, other primary healthcare providers and their community support provider.

"Supporting clients to receive the right care at the right time and in the right place is central to the design of the Improving Access to Primary Care service.

"The service also provides community service organisations with a greater capacity to recognise and support clients with chronic health conditions," Ms Richardson said.

Silver Chain Group chief executive officer Chris McGowan said the organisation is excited to be working with Ruah Community Services and Richmond Wellbeing to deliver this new service.

"Reconnecting people with services that support their physical, social and emotional needs is paramount. By working together, we can ensure our clients will receive the care they need in the community setting," Mr McGowan said.

Ruah Community Services chief executive officer Debra Zanella said the new service will make their clients feel comfortable and well supported.

“In particular, given one of the nurse practitioners already knows our clients, there is already a level of trust that will go a long way to helping them achieve better health outcomes,” Ms Zanella said.

**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)