



Ongoing funding ensures primary care stays top of WA's health reform agenda

3 July 2018

WA Primary Health Alliance is pleased to announce funding for its core operations across the primary care sector, including general practice support, has been confirmed by the Australian Department of Health for the next three years.

This means WA Primary Health Alliance can continue to work closely with a range of stakeholders across the state's health sector and the community to help join up the health system and keep more people well in the community and out of hospital.

Since our successful bid to the Australian Government in 2015 to operate all three newly established Primary Health Networks (PHNs) in Western Australia, we have been instrumental in the planning and commissioning of hundreds of primary healthcare services for Western Australians.

WA Primary Health Alliance CEO, Learne Durrington said the ongoing funding will enable the organisation to build on a strong foundation of engaging with GPs, community and other key stakeholders to determine priority needs and design solutions to address system-wide health issues.

"It means we can continue to keep primary healthcare at the top of the reform agenda to ensure all Western Australians have access to the very best of healthcare within available means, in particular the most vulnerable among us who deserve no less," Ms Durrington said.

The organisation's role in system change has been notable, through providing a primary care perspective in reforms such as the review of the Central Referral System, outpatient services, the development of Urgent Care Clinics and, currently, the Sustainable Health Review.

From the outset, WA Primary Health Alliance has been determined to work collaboratively with health agencies, clinicians, service providers and the community. This approach has seen it develop and refine a system of comprehensive population health need assessments to deliver evidence based solutions to community healthcare needs.

Another way in which the organisation has demonstrated its collaborative approach has been in the co-design of innovative services, such as its work with Silver Chain on the Integrum Aged Care + trial to support senior Australians with complex care needs and chronic health conditions to remain in their homes for as long as possible.

"Our team - based in Perth and in seven regional offices - are looking forward to another three years of working with our stakeholders and communities to move towards our vision of improving health equity for Western Australians," Ms Durrington said.

Three Year Highlights

- Allocated about \$180 million to commissioning primary healthcare services and projects;
- Designed a new Comprehensive Primary Care program to support and enhance general practice, with 120 practices enrolled in this program;
- Reshaped primary mental health services to allow state-wide parity of access;
- Funding 13 headspace centres, including the establishment of 2 new centres in the Pilbara and Mandurah, as well as a satellite of Bunbury headspace in Busselton;
- Planned the initial stages of implementation of WA's three Suicide Prevention Trial Sites, part of Federal Government's national initiative;
- Became the Australian National Chapter of The Alliance Against Depression;
- Implemented a state-wide general practice support program, Practice Assist, in partnership with Rural Health West;
- Ran a public education campaign, Choose Well, to encourage people to visit a GP rather than ED for non-emergencies;
- Supported GPs to plan optimal patient care through localising over 400 live health pathways;
- Contributed to the State Government's Sustainable Health Review;
- Provided countless expert reports and policy submissions to Federal and State Government on key issues including the Aboriginal Youth Suicide Inquiry, Aged Care Workforce Strategy Taskforce and Australia's National Digital Health Strategy; and
- Tasked by the Australian Digital Health Agency to run a comprehensive state-wide stakeholder engagement campaign in the lead up to the My Health Record opt out period, including engagement with nearly every general practitioner and pharmacy in WA.

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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