



Country WA PHN Activity Work Plan

After Hours Primary Health Care Program

**Summary View
2022/2023 – 2025/2026**

**Presented to the Australian Government Department of Health
and Aged Care**

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AH 1000 – After Hours Primary Health Care

Activity Title

After Hours Primary Health Care

Activity Number

1000

Activity Status

Modified

PHN Program Key Priority Area

Population Health

Aim of Activity

To reduce the number of potentially preventable hospitalisations during usual after hours general practice.

The Primary Health Network (PHN) will discuss with general practice, via Practice Support, after hour needs of patients and how these needs can be met through the After Hours Practice Incentive Program.

Description of Activity

The Albany After Hours GP Collaborative, provides a face to face after hours service delivered through a Primary Health Clinic co-located outside of the emergency department of the Albany Health Campus, utilising nurse practitioners to provide care with support from general practitioners. In addition, the service provides an on-call A-after hours service for residents of residential aged care facilities and people living in the community with aged and palliative care needs.

Funding for this service will cease on 31 December 2023. Consultation is occurring with the contractor and health partners (WA Country Health Service, residential aged care facility representatives, GP Collaborative) regarding the continuation of some of the elements of the service model and opportunities for alternative funding sources.

The PHN will continue to develop and maintain close working relationships with contracted service providers and will formally review services at six-and twelve-month intervals using a range of data collection methods (i.e., provider reports, referral agency feedback, patient feedback) to measure how targeted and efficient services are, and how effective services and systems are in relation to patient experience, patient health outcomes, cost efficiency and improved health equity.

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The PHN recognises the impact COVID-19 had on the community, primary health care and commissioned service activity. With services having returned, monitoring and service impact assessment will continue, to ensure the PHN continues to meet the aims of the activity and the needs of the priority target groups.

Country WA PHN Needs Assessment

Priorities

Page reference

Improve the management of chronic conditions for ageing populations and promote healthy ageing at home.	41
Improve access to mental health services in the Great Southern.	29

Target Population Cohort

People in the Albany area who require after hours care.

Consultation

The following stakeholders are being consulted as part of the transition:

- WA Country Health Service
- General practices
- Community members
- Residential aged care facilities

Coverage

Albany local government area within Country WA PHN region.

Activity Start Date

1 July 2019

Activity End Date

31 December 2023

Activity Planned Expenditure

Funding Stream	FY 22 23	FY 23 24	FY 24 25
After Hours Funding	\$585,164.95	\$242,102.88	\$0.00

AH 2000 – Increasing Access to After Hours Support Services

Activity Title

Increasing Access to Afters Hours Support Services

Activity Number

2000

Activity Status

Modified

PHN Program Key Priority Area

Population Health

Aim of Activity

To create greater access to primary health after hours services. This service focuses on vulnerable groups, including people living in residential aged care facilities, those who are disadvantaged and have palliative care needs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with mental health issues.

Services are delivered in a culturally appropriate manner, to reduce the number of preventable hospitalisations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people living in residential aged care facilities, and people living in the community with palliative care needs.

Description of Activity

Funding will continue to be provided for the following services to 31 December 2023.

1. In Derby and Broome in the Kimberley Region an after hours service for community based palliative care patients and an on-call service for Aboriginal Nursing Home residents that involves supporting residential aged care facilities personnel to improve their knowledge and coordination of care to maximise resident/patient's health outcomes.
2. In Geraldton in the Mid West Region a general practitioner after hours service will be provided through general practitioners who provide on call services and visits to the residents of three residential aged care facilities in Geraldton.
3. Other commissioned services may be considered that support the needs and health issues of the target group.

The PHN will continue to develop and maintain close working relationships with contracted service providers and will formally review services at six-and twelve-month

intervals using a range of data collection methods (i.e., provider reports, referral agency feedback, patient feedback) to determine:

- How well targeted and efficient services are.
- How effective services and systems are in relation to patient experience, patient health outcomes, service/system integration and service sustainability including provider experience/governance.

Country WA PHN Needs Assessment

Priorities

Page reference

Investigate successful alternatives to the provision of primary care in Emergency Departments in country regions.	56
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Target Population Cohort

Vulnerable groups in the population, including people in residential aged care facilities, those who are disadvantaged and have palliative care needs, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with mental health issues.

Consultation

The PHN will continue liaison with the following stakeholders regarding upcoming cessation of the service:

- WA Country Health Service
- Residential aged care facilities
- General practices

Coverage

Mid West and Kimberley local government areas within the Country WA PHN region.

Activity Start Date

Activity End Date

1 July 2019

31 December 2023

Activity Planned Expenditure

Funding Stream	FY 22 23	FY 23 24	FY 24 25
After Hours Funding	\$618,230.57	\$255,782.00	\$0.00

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AH 3000 – After Hours Integrated Mental Health, Suicide Prevention and Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service

Activity Title

After Hours integrated Mental Health, Suicide Prevention and Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service

Activity Number

5000

Activity Status

Modified

PHN Program Key Priority Area

Mental Health

Aim of Activity

To provide greater access to evidence-based, culturally appropriate after hours primary mental health care and alcohol and other drug services in areas where local need and local support for addressing those needs has been demonstrated.

This activity aims to facilitate support for clients with co-morbid mental and alcohol and other drug, and to reduce the number of preventable hospitalisations.

Description of Activity

Existing services have been increased through extension of hours and outreach locations. After hours services to provide treatment and support services to individuals and/or their families who are experiencing harm from alcohol and drug use to reduce the impact on individuals, families, and communities.

After hours services will provide a comprehensive range of treatment options to substance users and their families. Other commissioned services may be considered that support the needs and health issues of the target group.

The Primary Health Network (PHN) will continue to develop and maintain close working relationships with contracted service providers, and will formally review services at six and twelve month intervals using a diverse range of data collection methods (i.e. provider reports, referral agency feedback, patient feedback) to

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determine how well targeted and efficient services are, and how effective services and systems are in relation to patient experience, patient health outcomes, cost efficiency and improved health equity.

The PHN will continue to monitor and assess the impact of COVID-19 on access to the primary health care services commissioned within this activity. Where required, the commissioned services may be modified, and additional services commissioned to help the PHN to continue to meet the aims of the activity and the needs of the priority target groups.

This activity's After Hours Program funding will cease on 31 December 2023. Following a PHN review of services and clarification of the Federal Government's After Hours program guidance and direction, some services may transition post June 2023 to Alcohol and Drug Funding Streams as appropriate.

Country WA PHN Needs Assessment

Priorities

Page reference

Increase access to early intervention and AOD management services including family supports.	71
Increase access to suicide prevention and mental health services and promote an integrated mental health system for the Wheatbelt.	101
Improve access to screening and AOD treatment services.	15

Target Population Cohort

Individuals and/or their families who are experiencing harm from alcohol and drug use.

Consultation

The PHN will engage with the following stakeholders to support the transition and cessation of services associated with this activity:

- WA Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies
- Mental Health Commission

Coverage

Country WA PHN

Activity Start Date

Activity End Date

1 July 2019

31 December 2023

Activity Planned Expenditure

Funding Stream	FY 22 23	FY 23 24	FY 24 25
After Hours Funding	\$1,280,650.44	\$133,401.00	\$0.00

AH 5000 – Strengthening General Practice in WA: Comprehensive Primary Care

Activity Title

Strengthening General Practice in WA: Comprehensive Primary Care

Activity Number

5000

Activity Status

Modified

PHN Program Key Priority Area

Population Health

Aim of Activity

To develop sustainable general practice business models which increase access to comprehensive primary care services and reduce reliance on hospital emergency departments. The activity aims to increase access to skilled, integrated, multi-disciplinary teams which work to the top of their scope, increasing access to comprehensive health services including equity of access to after-hours care. This activity complements the existing practice support offered through the Primary Health Network (PHN) Core Operational funding stream for activity HSI 1010 - General Practice Support.

The activities are consistent with the foundations of the Comprehensive Primary Care (CPC) program based heavily on the Quintuple Aim of High Performing Practices. Building on this program our work will expand to a larger number of practices to integrate primary health services to address fragmentation, provide a seamless patient experience, and support effective communication and continuity of care across after hours service providers and a patient's regular general practitioner. This activity develops innovative solutions to address service gaps and improve access to primary health care, ensuring the needs of people susceptible to adverse health outcomes as a result of inequitable access to resource, exacerbated by living in rural and remote locations

Description of Activity

This initiative focuses on working collaboratively to build capacity, capability, and sustainability of general practice to improve availability of general practitioner services. This will ensure a robust and continuous primary care system within country

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to support overall community health and reduce the reliance on hospital after hours services and potentially preventable hospitalisations.

An emphasis on collaboration with general practice, primary care services and allied health professionals addresses gaps in care to provide a seamless patient experience and reduce the impact of maldistribution of the workforce.

Country WA PHN will continue to deliver the program based on CPC and the Quintuple Aim with the following activity:

- The PHN supports practices to lead and develop practice teams which support the provision of sustainable primary care services in country, including access to after-hours care as appropriate.
- Build practices that are scalable, sustainable, adaptive to future changes and promote healthy communities to reduce reliance on hospitals, particularly after-hours and emergency services.
- Practices plan, collect, manage, and use data to optimise practice and business performance, and maximize patient health and population health outcomes with a focus on using data for quality improvement purposes, business viability, sustainability, and patient-centred care.
- Practices develop, and improve, sustainable quality improvement systems and processes to provide optimal health services in rural and regional WA.
- Practices improve emergency response planning to maintain after hours and emergency services and engage with the community to provide services which are place-based and address gaps in service. Particular attention to COVID-19 managed pandemic responses will apply.
- While ensuring COVID-19 response activities, the PHN will continue to support the management of chronic disease and screening initiatives.
- Practices improve coordination and continuity of care to support patients and ensure better health and seamless primary care.
- Practices will continuously improve business and clinical systems and processes to optimise the performance of the practice, using small, rapid cycles of quality improvement using the Plan Do Study Act model which has been demonstrated to have significant benefits against the Quintuple Aim.
- Practices have access to:
 - Leadership and change management training.
 - Provision of expert advice,
 - Assistance with sustainable business models and financial modelling to support viable general practices thorough analysis of practice data to enable quality improvement activities with a view to sustainability including patient feedback.
 - A regional community of practice – a support network of other practices, to network, share lessons learned and best practice.

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- Training to support general practices in the use of clinical software programs.

Country WA PHN Needs Assessment

Priorities

Page reference

Support primary health care providers to manage chronic disease populations and build capacity for patient self-management.	15
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Target Population Cohort

Population of the PHN

Consultation

Consultation with key stakeholders:

- General practitioners – through GP advisory group.
- Practice Managers.
- General practice staff.

Collaboration

All relevant practice staff including general practitioners, practice nurses, practice managers, reception staff and other clinical staff within the practice.

Coverage

Country WA PHN.

Activity Start Date

1 July 2018

Activity End Date

31 December 2023

Activity Planned Expenditure

Funding Stream	FY 22 23	FY 23 24	FY 24 25
After Hours Funding	\$1,058,589.87	\$1,143,646.89	\$0.00

AH 6000 – Urgent Care Clinics Public Awareness and Education Campaign

Activity Title

Urgent Care Clinics Public Awareness and Education Campaign

Approved by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, July 2023

Activity Number

6000

Activity Status

Modified

PHN Program Key Priority Area

Population Health

Aim of Activity

To reduce primary care type presentations at emergency departments by building knowledge and raising awareness among consumers about their options as part of a larger project to provide alternative and optimal urgent care options in a general practice setting.

Description of Activity

WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) partnered with the WA Department of Health (WADoH) to deliver the pilot phase of the General Practice Urgent Care Network (GPUCN) with the aim to address behavioural change encouraging people to choose primary care over hospital options. The network is a group of existing general practices demonstrating direct action towards integrated urgent care, supported by development and implementation of a public awareness campaign to improve urgent care awareness and knowledge, and demonstrated use of the GPUCN.

Practices apply to participate in the GPUCN project They are accepted into the network if they demonstrate the minimum expectations for how urgent care services are to be delivered within the GPUCN project.

Membership to the GPUCN project allows primary care urgent care providers endorsement within the Department of Health and Aged Care and WAPHA's community education and awareness campaign, support for improving lines of communication with public hospital emergency departments, opportunities for networking and direct contribution to the development of future policy and strategy for urgent care services in WA.

Success of the GPUCN is dependent on people's awareness and acceptance of such services. The intention is that the GPUCN will assist people's knowledge of primary care urgent care, options for management of urgent care, and specific locations for where urgent care can be managed. The GPUCN project has leveraged the National

Health Services Directory and the booking platform vendors to create an Urgent Care landing page which shows all the general practices participating in the network and their next available urgent care appointment. This appointment can be booked directly via the landing page HealthEngine, HotDoc, AutoMED, and CODDs.

Training for general practice staff to up-skill in urgent care is a key component of the project. This includes general practitioners, practice nurses and other administration staff who manage the reception desk.

There was a public awareness and education campaign for the Urgent Care Clinics which was co-funded by WADoH. This campaign included the development of the web interface and the public awareness campaign running on billboards, television, and online platforms across the metropolitan area and the South West region.

While the GPUCN pilot has proven to successfully achieve most aims, the impact on reducing emergency department demand was limited. The initiative demonstrated some capacity to manage ATS Category 4 and 5 patients in the primary care setting, though it is unclear how scalable or sustainable this is given competing general practitioners priorities, and new funding for Commonwealth Medicare Urgent Care Clinics. It is therefore recommended that:

- WAPHA and WADoH continue to work together to identify opportunities to maximise the impact of the foundational program on emergency demand.
- Before additional investment is made in the GPUCN model for the purposes of reducing emergency department demand, further research and engagement is needed to understand the barriers to scalability and how they might be overcome.
- Further research and engagement of the patient experience of the booking process, including user acceptance testing of the digital functionality to see if it is contributing to the low conversion rate of website visits to appointment bookings.
- Understanding referral pathways, and research how to increase call volumes from the 1800 Healthdirect helpline.
- Consideration be given to how the GPUCN can be aligned with Sustainable Health Review Recommendation 10 to ensure the sustainability and continued strengthening of the partnerships forged through the program, providing a solid foundation for future improvement work.
- Exploratory work will be undertaken to inform and address the recommendations from the pilot evaluation including focus groups, practice surveys and consultation with WADoH. This work will occur through the PHNs Core Funding Schedule, activity CF 6010 – GP Urgent Care Network Public Awareness and Education Campaign.

Country WA PHN Needs Assessment

Priorities

Page reference

Investigate successful alternatives to the provision of primary care in Emergency Departments in country regions.	12
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Target Population Cohort

Population of the Country WA PHN

Consultation

The PHN continues to consult with a variety of stakeholders including:

- Hospital emergency department teams
- WA Country Health Service personnel
- WA Health management
- GP Urgent Care Network

Coverage

Country WA PHN

Activity Start Date

1 September 2019

Activity End Date

31 December 2023

Activity Planned Expenditure

Funding Stream	FY 22 23	FY 23 24	FY 24 25
After Hours Funding	\$153,329.04	\$200,000.00	\$0.00

AH 6010 – GP Respiratory Clinics After Hours Incentive

Activity Title

GP Respiratory Clinics After Hours Incentive

Approved by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, July 2023

Activity Number

6010

Activity Status

Modified

PHN Program Key Priority Area

Population Health

Aim of Activity

To provide support for Australia's COVID-19 Vaccine and Treatment Strategy by providing support and other incentives to attract and retain general practices and Aboriginal Community Controlled Services in the after hours period, to operate as GP Respiratory clinics.

The general practitioner (GP) led after hours GP Respiratory Clinics will enable people experiencing mild to moderate respiratory conditions to be assessed and treated in the community and also help to reduce pressure on emergency departments.

The aims of the activity are to:

- Increase access to GP services to COVID-19 positive patients during the afterhours period where the regular GP is not available.
 - Increase access to assessment and testing of COVID symptoms in the afterhours period.
 - Avoid unnecessary presentation of patients to hospital.
-

Description of Activity

The PHN will support those general practices and Aboriginal Community Controlled Services engaging in the GP Respiratory Clinics After Hours activity by:

- Supporting the needs of the clinics' workforce to ensure infection control, quality and safety are at the forefront.
- Supporting each respiratory clinic to be appropriate to the local community.
- Continuing to consult and collaborate with key stakeholders, including WA Department of Health and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, to ensure activities are responsive and dynamic in response to the changing COVID -19 environment, and that escalation pathways are in place.
- Supporting respiratory clinics to raise awareness among consumers and other clinicians about their respiratory condition and treatment options.

Through engagement with emergency department teams, and the PHNs GP Respiratory Clinics promotional materials, COVID-positive patients being discharged home will be encouraged to attend their GP Respiratory Clinic if their condition is of concern but does not require hospital assessment.

Unlike most COVID-19 testing facilities, GP Respiratory Clinics are GP led and can provide a full assessment at the same time as performing COVID-19 testing.

Country WA PHN Needs Assessment

Priorities	Page reference
Improve access to culturally appropriate services for Aboriginal people in the South West.	71
Investigate successful alternatives to the provision of primary care in Emergency Departments in country regions	56
Improve access to coordinated culturally appropriate primary care for Aboriginal people	15
Support primary health care providers to manage chronic disease populations and build capacity for patient self-management	15
Ensure primary care services are available for people with chronic conditions that provide a holistic approach to management including improving self-management	43

Target Population Cohort

People with COVID-19 symptoms and COVID-19 positive people in the PHN region.

Consultation

The PHN consulted with and continues to consult with a variety of stakeholders including:

- Hospital emergency department teams
- WA Country Health Service personnel
- WA Health management
- GP Respiratory Clinics

Coverage

Country WA PHN

Activity Start Date

1 January 2022

Activity End Date

28 February 2023

Activity Planned Expenditure

Funding Stream	FY 22 23	FY 23 24	FY 24 25
After Hours Funding	\$574,063.93	\$0.00	\$0.00

AH 7000 – HealthPathways – aged care pathways content expansion

Activity Title

HealthPathways – aged care pathways content expansion

Approved by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, July 2023

Activity Number

7000

Activity Status

Modified

PHN Program Key Priority Area

Aged Care

Aim of Activity

HealthPathways WA is a secure web-based portal providing localised information on patient assessment and management and referral pathways to assist general practitioners and other health professionals in navigating patients through the complex primary, community and acute health care systems in Western Australia.

The activity will utilise WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) proven HealthPathways methodology to undertake a comprehensive review of the current Aged Care HealthPathways clinical stream. A determination of potential improvements to address unmet areas and information gaps will be completed and any required actions addressed through the development or update of clinical and service information pages.

Description of Activity

This activity will convene Clinical Working Groups to scope gaps and issues. The Working Groups will:

- Consist of geriatricians, general practitioners, service providers and allied health professionals to review and provide input on pathways, meeting as required.
- Identify gaps and issues which can be addressed within the pathways (successfully completed in 2021).
- Develop additional HealthPathways content related to aged care and dementia, including clinical and service information.
- Review and expand current pathways to include more comprehensive service listings, referral pathways and clinical guidelines.
- Incorporate general practitioner education based on the developed pathways. This activity will include face to face sessions and/or webinars delivered by specialists involved in the pathway development

Activity funding will be utilised for staffing to develop clinical content, map, and document service information, as well as a contribution towards licencing, technical writing and other related HealthPathway development costs.

Country WA PHN Needs Assessment

Priorities

Page reference

Improve the management of chronic conditions for ageing populations and promote healthy ageing at home.	41
Support people living with dementia and their carers to navigate the aged care system and access appropriate services	41
Promote early intervention and monitoring activities to support older adults to live at home and reduce early entry into residential care	43

Target Population Cohort

General practitioners and other health care workers in the PHN region.

Consultation

Developing and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders including peak bodies and provider organisations will be required to ensure that HealthPathways contain current best practice information, accurate clinical guidelines and referral information in a format that can be used by general practitioners at point of care.

This will ensure that the ageing population, those with dementia and their families and carers receive the right care and resources, at the right time, in the right place.

Consultation will occur with key stakeholders including:

- General practitioners and other health primary professionals
- Dementia Australia
- Alzheimer's WA
- Older Adults Health Network
- Health Service Providers
- WA Department of Health
- WA HealthPathways Users (accessible on request to WA based General practitioners and other Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency registered clinicians)

The PHN promotes WA HealthPathways to specific audiences at conferences (e.g., Rural Health West Conference), through internally and externally produced written communications and articles (e.g., WAPHA publications GP Connect and Practice

Connect; Medical Journal of Australia; Medical Forum).

The PHN delivers education and training to those working in general practice (and other clinicians).

Collaboration

Developing relationships and collaborating with key aged care stakeholders including peak bodies and provider organisations improves coordination, integration, and continuity of care at the aged care, health, primary care interfaces.

Key stakeholders, in addition to those previously listed include:

- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.
- Subject Matter Experts, including hospital clinicians, non-GP medical specialists, allied health practitioners, nurses etc.), Consumer representatives, GPs, Health Service Providers, Peak Bodies (e.g., Dementia Australia) engage with HealthPathways WA to:
 - Collaborate on clinical and referral pathways.
 - Provide representation and specialist expertise in working groups related to HealthPathways development.
- Streamliners NZ.
- Other stakeholders as they are identified.

The PHN administers the WA HealthPathways platform, which is owned by Streamliners NZ. The PHN develops and authors new clinical (and non-clinical) HealthPathways and Request (referral) pages and maintains and updates existing HealthPathways in line with the style guide provided by Streamliners NZ. Streamliners NZ provide technical writing services to standardise, draft and publish the provided content to the WA HealthPathways platform

Coverage

Country WA PHN

Activity Start Date

25 January 2021

Activity End Date

31 December 2023

Activity Planned Expenditure

Funding Stream	FY 22 23	FY 23 24	FY 24 25
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After Hours Funding	\$251.733.42	\$0.00	\$0.00
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