

MEDIA RELEASE

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Strengthening the Northern Sydney region's response to local mental health, drug and alcohol, and suicide prevention needs through community and health services collaboration

Sydney North Health Network and Northern Sydney Local Health District have developed a Joint Regional Plan to strengthen the response to local mental health, drug and alcohol, and suicide prevention needs over the next five years.

The Northern Sydney Joint Regional Mental Health, Suicide Prevention and Alcohol and Other Drugs Plan (the Regional Plan) is informed by the work the NSLHD and SNHN undertook across 2019 and 2020 with over 400 local stakeholders – including clinicians, people with a lived experience, carers, and community members – to explore and understand local mental health issues and potential solutions.

“Our Regional Plan lays out the direction we need to travel in as a region to make sure the experience through the care system is as easy and effective as possible for all involved. This will ensure the best outcome for the service user,” said Lynelle Hales, CEO of Sydney North Health Network, “We look forward to working with NSLHD, local people with lived experience, clinicians and service providers to implement the plan.”

The Regional Plan sets out a range of priorities identified during the consultation period, including:

- improving partnerships and coordination between organisations and across sectors (enabling better care and better use of resources)
- building on efforts to educate community members and healthcare professionals, including improving the physical health of people with mental health and AOD issues
- strengthening community awareness of mental health services and how to access the support they need.

Northern Sydney Local Health District Chief Executive Deb Willcox said the district is committed to providing the very best mental health and drug and alcohol services to the community.

“We look forward to building on what has already been achieved by working with our mental health service provider partners to deliver on the priority areas for mental health service provision this plan identifies.

“By enhanced collaboration with all stakeholders we hope to improve the mental health and drug and alcohol services for all people of Northern Sydney,” she said.

The Regional Plan's priorities and next steps look to build upon Northern Sydney health care providers existing mental health and wellbeing initiatives. The aim is to develop a region-wide approach and response with those health professionals involved in local people's mental health care.

The plan is both revolutionary and evolutionary, creating connected care across our region's primary and district health front line whilst combining and developing care actions and initiatives over time.

This includes working with our region's vulnerable population groups requiring targeted and specialist approaches to aid in their treatment.

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Background

Link to the Joint Regional Mental Health plan:

<https://sydneynorthhealthnetwork.org.au/thenorthernregionplan/>

About Sydney North Health Network

The Northern Sydney PHN, operated by the Sydney North Health Network, is one of 31 Primary Health Networks (PHNs) established by the Australian Government to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of health and medical services for the local community. Their focus is on patients who are at risk of poor health outcomes, and we work to improve the coordination of their care, so they receive the right care, in the right place at the right time.

Sydney North Health Network can achieve better health outcomes for community members by working together in partnership with a network of local health professionals including general practitioners, practice nurses, allied health providers, the Northern Sydney Local Health District and other related health services.

About the Northern Sydney Local Health District

Northern Sydney Local Health District is one of the leading health services in Australia providing high-quality healthcare to a population of nearly 970,000 people.

The district covers a region approximately 900 square kilometres between Sydney Harbour and the Hawkesbury River. This includes the Local Government Areas of Hornsby, Ku-ring-gai, North Sydney, Mosman, Northern Beaches, Ryde, Hunters Hill, Lane Cove and Willoughby.

As well as providing health care services to the local population the district also provides state-wide services at Royal North Shore Hospital - the district's principal tertiary referral hospital. These include major trauma, severe burns, spinal cord injuries, neonatal intensive care, bone marrow transplantation, neurosurgery, and interventional neuroradiology.

Other hospitals in the district include Ryde, Mona Vale and Hornsby Ku-ring-gai hospitals. Northern Beaches Hospital provides public health services purchased by NSLHD from the private operator of the hospital. Other health services include Primary and Community Health and Mental Health Drug and Alcohol.

The district has a skilled and dedicated workforce of more than 11,000 staff committed to providing high-quality safe patient care to the community. Services are provided in the hospital setting and in the community.

Media contacts

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