

Community health services are publicly funded primary care organisations that deliver an integrated model of healthcare to their local communities.

Firmly committed to equity of access and health outcomes, community health services offer a platform that ensures that everyone can access high quality health and medical services, regardless of their ability to pay.

With a close focus on the higher cost of unnecessary hospitalisations to the Australian taxpayer, a robust community health sector plays an essential role in improving health and wellbeing in settings that are close to people's homes and at an affordable cost.

Community health services across Australia offer a diverse range of services, including:

- Drug and alcohol services
- Allied health services
- Child health services
- Chronic disease management
- Rehabilitation services
- Family violence services
- Dental health services
- Disability services
- Family planning
- General practice
- Indigenous health services
- Health promotion
- Home and community care services
- Medical services
- Mental health services
- Post-acute care services
- Hospital admission risk programs
- Refugee health

The community health sector consists of not-for-profit independent charities and community health services operating within and outside of public hospitals, both in metropolitan and rural Australia.

AHHA POSITION:

- ✧ Multi-disciplinary community health services have a vital role in improving people's health and wellbeing, and reducing unnecessary hospitalisations across Australia by providing a wide range of primary care services tailored to community needs.
- ✧ The increasing number of people with complex chronic conditions and the continuing pressure on acute hospitals make the maintenance and coordination of primary and community health services even more critical.
- ✧ A national commitment to the resourcing and delivery of primary and community healthcare that extends beyond the Medicare Benefits Schedule and includes the full suite of services and programs delivered by community health services is essential if governments are to respond to both growth in rates of non-communicable disease and continued health budget constraints.
- ✧ The links between social disadvantage and poor health outcomes are well established. Community health services offer a not-for-profit, accredited and safe platform that integrates health and social services in a way that benefits the individual and family seeking care.
- ✧ This platform delivers significant improvements in health and social outcomes through a combination of medical and non-medical community health programs, which support people who are vulnerable and isolated.
- ✧ A community health sector with adequate funding can provide equitable, efficient and accessible care tailored to the varying needs of communities across Australia.

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Developed in collaboration with Victorian Healthcare Association

Released May 2016