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SERVICE EXAMPLE:

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE AFTER HOURS SERVICE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Client	WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA)
Services	Literature review, stakeholder engagement, strategy development
Context	<p>WAPHA receives funding for After Hours services for the Perth North, Perth South and Country WA Primary Health Networks (PHNs). The funding was due to cease on 30 June 2021 and confirmation had not been received regarding ongoing funding.</p> <p>WAPHA commissioned AHHA to develop a strategy for WAPHA to take following confirmation of either the cessation or continuation of the After Hours funding stream. The aim of the strategy was that it would support WAPHA's ongoing work to improve health equity in WA through access to primary health care services, including care provided in the after hours period.</p>
Approach	<p>AHHA commenced the project with a desktop review of relevant documentation, data and information, including after hours strategy documents from other PHNs. This was complemented by a literature review that sought to identify potential after hours models of care that could be used by Country WA PHN which faced particular challenges in providing access to after hours care.</p> <p>AHHA then undertook three activities concurrently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment of the Call-A-Doc service model: a telehealth service model used in regional areas, with contrast to use of the <i>HealthDirect</i> After Hours GP Helpline;• Development of regional profiles which brought together after hours service requirements and utilisation, regional population health profiles, community needs assessments and workforce data to group regions by common characteristics to support a more tailored approach to commissioning services and the provision of practice support;• Stakeholder consultation to understand the development of previous approaches, what had worked and why, challenges and the attempts to fix them and strengths and weaknesses in the PHNs relationships with service providers.

Supported by the information gleaned through these activities, AHHA then prepared a comprehensive After Hours Strategy that provided clear actions for WAPHA to take if funding was continued or ceased.

Result

The essential service requirements for the development of primary health care models in rural and remote Australia have (Wakerman et al. 2009), provided a useful framework for:

- Reflecting the significant variation in regions across WA in terms of the needs of the populations, and the existing services available to meet these needs; and
- Analysing the evidence for, feasibility, acceptability and critical enablers for different strategies that can be pursued to improve access to primary health care in the after-hours period.

WAPHA are using this work to support a shared cross-sector understanding of the challenges facing the provision of after-hours care in different regions across WA, and to inform the development of primary health care models and commissioning of services.

Date completed April 2021
