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Health Needs Assessment now available

Following extensive stakeholder consultation, Brisbane North PHN has released a comprehensive assessment examining the health needs of its local communities and the services available.



The Australian Government Department of Health directed all PHNs to undertake a needs assessment process to identify and analyse health and service needs within their regions.

Brisbane North PHN Deputy CEO Jeff Cheverton said the Health Needs Assessment would inform how the PHN prioritised its activity to address identified needs.

“Development of this document has been a major undertaking and I want to acknowledge the contributions of the local service providers, consumers and health professionals we consulted as part of this process,” Mr Cheverton said.

“The Health Needs Assessment breaks our region down into five subregions and proposes health reform activities across five main themes,” he said.

“Moreton Bay North, which includes places like Morayfield, Caboolture and Deception Bay, is categorised both as a subregion and a priority theme.

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“Our research indicates the population of Moreton Bay North experiences poorer health outcomes than other parts of the PHN region.

“This situation is influenced by factors often referred to as the social determinants of health, such as employment and education status, and the level of household income, for example.

“Access to health services is also far more limited in this subregion. In other words, there are fewer health services in Moreton Bay North and consequently fewer health professionals working there,” Mr Cheverton said.

Other priority themes identified in the Health Needs Assessment include:

- Health promotion: strategies that reduce health risk factors that contribute to chronic conditions and ill health.
- Preventable hospitalisations: Attendances which could have been prevented if there was better health literacy (both among individuals and healthcare professionals) and better service navigation available.
- Mental health: There is a clear disparity between the northern and southern parts of the PHN region and higher rates of mental distress in Moreton Bay North.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders: Significant health inequalities across a number of indicators which is resulting in poorer life expectancy than the population as a whole.

“Brisbane North PHN has recently completed two workshops where we engaged local stakeholders to co-design solutions to the health priorities in our region,” Mr Cheverton said.

“The workshops, which took place in Herston and Caboolture, are an important part of our health needs assessment process,” he said.

The PHN is also developing specialist needs assessments for mental health and suicide prevention and for alcohol and other drug treatment services.

ENDS

Editor’s note:

To read or to view a video about the Brisbane North PHN Health Needs Assessment, go to: <http://www.brisbanenorthphn.org.au/page/about/our-region/health-planning/>. Print quality images from the co-design forums are available from Dropbox here: <http://ow.ly/4mSEZV>

About the Brisbane North PHN

Brisbane North PHN supports clinicians and communities in Brisbane’s northern suburbs, Moreton Bay Regional Council and parts of Somerset Regional Council. It covers approximately 4,100 km² of urban, regional and rural areas, with a population of over 900,000.

The Federal Government announced the establishment of 31 Primary Health Networks to replace the national network of Medicare Locals in 2015. The Government selected successful PHNs through an open and competitive process, including the Brisbane North PHN.

The key objectives of the PHN are:

- increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes; and
- improving coordination of care to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

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