Wentworth Healthcare

Blue Mountains | Hawkesbury | Lithgow | Penrith

HIGHLIGHTS 2016

Improving health for the communities of the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Lithgow & Penrith

Wentworth Healthcare Limited (ABN 88 155 904 975) provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains PHN
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Who we are

Wentworth Healthcare is a not for profit organisation dedicated to improving health for our local community.

The Nepean Blue Mountains includes:
- Blue Mountains Local Government Area
- Hawkesbury Local Government Area
- Lithgow Local Government Area
- Penrith Local Government Area

Since 2012, Wentworth Healthcare (WHL) has been working to improve the health of people living in the Nepean Blue Mountains region.

WHL initially traded as the Nepean-Blue Mountains Medicare Local (NBMML) until 30 June 2015 when the Federal Government replaced Medicare Locals with the Primary Health Network Programme.

After a competitive tender process, WHL was selected to operate the region’s new Primary Health Network commencing 1 July 2015.

Central to our role is the identification and prioritisation of local health needs and service gaps. In conjunction with healthcare professionals, consumers and other stakeholders we work to identify solutions and coordinate or commission local health services to ensure consumers receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

The following organisations are members of Wentworth Healthcare:
- Blue Mountains GP Network
- Nepean GP Network
- Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association
- Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils
- Lithgow City Council

Wentworth Healthcare board members are:
- Dr Andrew Knight (Chair)
- Ms Gabrielle Armstrong
- Ms Diana Aspinall
- Mr Paul Brennan
- Ms Jillian Harrington
- Ms Jennifer Mason
- Dr Shiva Prakash
- Dr Tony Rombola
- Mr Tony Thirlwell

Our Mission
Empower local general practice and other healthcare professionals to deliver high quality, accessible and integrated primary healthcare that meets the needs of our community.

Our Vision
Improved health for the people in our community.

Our Values
- Respect
- Ethical Practice
- Quality
- Collaboration
- Continuous Improvement
**Our Region**

360,000 people live in our region

Our region is 9,100km², covering three different categories of remoteness:
Major Cities (RA1), Inner Regional (RA2) and Outer Regional (RA3)

1 MILLION catchment population by 2025

**LIFE EXPECTANCY**

83.2 yrs 78.7 yrs

Life expectancy is about the same as the State average, which is 82.5 years for females in NSW and 78.7 for males.

Life expectancy in NSW for the Aboriginal population lowers to 74.6 years for females and 70.3 for males.

People with a severe and persistent mental illness have a life expectancy of 25 to 30 years less than the general population.

**SCREENING**

29% women 50-69 never screened for breast cancer (NSW, 22%)

55% screened every two years for cervical cancer (NSW, 67.7%). But this drops to less than 54% in Lithgow and Penrith.

Bowel screening participation is close to State average, 31.2% to 32.8%.

Leading causes of death in the NBM region:
1. Circulatory diseases
2. Cancers
3. Respiratory diseases

59%
OBESE OR OVERWEIGHT
in adults compared to the State average (53%)

93%
DON'T EAT ENOUGH FRUIT & VEG

50%
DON'T GET ENOUGH EXERCISE

15.7%
Smoking rates on par with the state average, (NSW, 15.6%)

9,212
IDENTIFY AS BEING ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
(2.7% of the population)

15.4%
Aged 12-17 report high psychological distress (NSW, 14%)

Over 10,000 people find it difficult or unable to access transportation to health services

360,000 people live in our region

Over 1 MILLION catchment population by 2025

**HEALTH BEHAVIOURS**

1 in 10 adults report high or very high psychological distress

There are 4 correctional centres in our region

In NSW, 76% of prisoners and 21% of young people in custody smoke

Smoking rates for those with severe and persistent mental health are 3 to 4 times higher than the general population

In NSW, 37% of Aboriginal adults aged 16 years and over smoke
30.9% of mothers smoke during pregnancy, more than double the regional rate.

24.3% of 15 - 19 yo are neither learning nor earning (NSW, 18.6%)

40.2% breast screening is more than 10% below State average (NSW, 50.9%)

Aboriginal population 4.45%, higher than State average (NSW, 2.5%)

448 GPs & training registrars
This means in our region we have 1 fulltime GP per 1,196 people

145 PRACTICE NURSES

75.9% BABIES FULLY BREASTFED ON DISCHARGE FROM HOSPITAL
Nationally, exclusive breast-feeding reduces to 39% within the first 4 months.

85% of adults visit a GP each year

16.5% see their GP 11+ times each year, the highest visitation rate of all similar regions

92.9% of GP consults are bulk-billed, the highest of all similar regions

431,200 ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

36,748 POTENTIALLY PREVENTABLE HOSPITALISATIONS
1. Urinary tract infections
2. COPD
3. Cellulitis
4. Dental conditions

114,000 ANNUAL VISITS TO EMERGENCY

Road traffic injury is the highest cause of avoidable deaths

Unhealthy levels of alcohol consumption are higher than the State average

60.3% cervical screening, above State average (NSW, 57.7%)

Aboriginal population 3%, higher than State average (NSW, 2.5%)

50.4% cervical screening, below State average (NSW, 57.7%)

Arts in town centre-

Domestic violence occurs at a rate of 588.4 per 100,000
(NSW, 396.4 per 100,000)

88.24% fully immunised up to age 5 (State target: 92%)

8.2% (NSW, 10.3%)

800 GP & Allied Health PRACTICES

9 GP practices

25 GP practices

25 GP practices

78 GP practices

9 GP practices

25 GP practices

Blue Mountains

Penrith

Lithgow

Hawkesbury

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Arts in town centre-
Highlights at a glance

143,000
after hours GP consultations
across the region

350,000+
My Health Records
1 of only 2 PHNs selected for
My Health Record Opt-out trial

25,283
mental health consultations
for local community members

94%
fully immunised
under 5yo (non-Aboriginal children)

270+
workforce consultations
to increase the number of GPs
and practice staff in our region.

94.7%
fully immunised
under 5yo (Aboriginal children)

1,461
attendances
by primary healthcare professionals
at our educational events

21,029
Aboriginal Health
occasions of service to our Aboriginal
& Torres Strait Islander community

1,850
activities provided
to general practice

30 Consumer & Community Representatives
guide the work of NBMPHN
Wentworth Healthcare plays a vital role in planning and coordinating primary healthcare services across the region.

We do this by working with the local community, clinicians, health and other services to identify gaps and develop solutions that will work in our region.

While our effort to improve the health of our region is an ongoing commitment, it is important to recognise the activity and achievements of our organisation during the last 12 months.

Following are just some of the highlights from July 2015 to June 2016.
After Hours

143,000 after hours GP consultations

After hours services are vital to assist the people in our region when medical care may be needed outside of normal business hours.

This year we have added two more 24/7 pharmacy and medical deputising service providers to the areas where there were shortages, bringing the total to seven now operating across our region.

We provide financial and practical management support to the Hawkesbury After Hours GP Clinic, as well as fully operating the Nepean After Hours GP Clinic. Across both facilities, over 12,000 consultations took place in the last 12 months.

“I went to the After Hours Clinic on a Sunday to bring my daughter who was very concerned with a health issue. I was surprised that the wait wasn’t very long; the nurse was lovely and reassuring; the GP was very thorough and took time to explain the issue so that my daughter could understand it. I would go back to the AH Clinic again.”

– Resident of Penrith
Aboriginal Health
21,029 occasions of service

Healthy for Life
4,196 occasions of service

The Healthy for Life Program supports the Aboriginal community members in the Blue Mountains and has been operating since 2011.

Client registrations to the Healthy for Life program increased by 21% this year. 32% (424) of the Blue Mountains Aboriginal population are now linked with the five Healthy for Life sites. Due to the concerted engagement efforts of the Healthy for Life team, 4196 occasions of service were provided for clients. Males registered with the program increased by 25% this year.

According to the Online Services Report by the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare, for the period 2014-2015, the program is tracking very well on a national basis.

This year, we coordinated a health prevention and education initiative in partnership with Aboriginal students at Katoomba High School, which culminated with them writing a song with a strong health message linking spiritual and physical wellbeing. A video featuring their song “Stand Up, Stay Strong” was completed.

Community programs were also run to promote smoking prevention, men’s health and to support families with babies and young children.

Closing the Gap
16,833 occasions of service

The Closing the Gap (CTG) program supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people access the health services they need.

The program assists people to seek healthcare early, to have regular health checks and navigate the healthcare system.

The CTG team supported 278 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients this year with 84% being referred by local GPs.

Our Care Coordinators facilitated 276 clients to access Specialists and Allied Health services, with 10,915 occasions of services provided, including Renal, Ophthalmology, Psychiatric, Sleep Physicians, Cardiologists and Neurologist services.

Our Aboriginal Outreach Workers supported patients with accessing Aboriginal health checks, subsidised pharmaceuticals, consultations with specialists and transport to appointments, providing 5,528 occasions of services.

The Indigenous Project Officers promoted the program to 183 practices and provided 390 occasions of services, presenting to 2,227 people at over 40 cultural and networking events, including the Penrith Sharing and Learning Circle, Homeless Hub Forum and NSW Nurses Conference.

Recounting the inspiring journey of a Healthy for Life client:

From living in a local nursing home feeling isolated and disconnected from his community, Fred* improved his health, re-connected with his culture and returned to his home country. With the help of a Healthy For Life Aboriginal Outreach Worker (AOW), Fred was linked with the Blue Mountains Aboriginal and Cultural Resource Centre to attend cultural events. His AOW attended his GP and Specialist appointments and through regular ongoing discussions, was able to assist him to improve his mental wellbeing and ultimately, be removed from being under the care and protection of the Public Guardian.

* Not his real name
Mental Health
25,283 occasions of service
Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS)
10,332 consultations by 92 mental health professionals

The Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) program enables GPs to refer patients with mild to moderate mental health issues for subsidised psychological intervention to local health professionals.

A customer satisfaction survey was conducted in 2015 with a sample of 80 ATAPS customers. The results indicated an overwhelming satisfaction with the service including: location and access to the mental health professional; waiting times; and treatment. Most customers were made aware of the ATAPS service by their GP (67.5%) with the remainder being informed by their mental health professional.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Very Satisfied /Satisfied</th>
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<tr>
<td>How satisfied were you with the waiting time for your initial appointment with the ATAPS mental health professional?</td>
<td>96.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied were you with the location where you saw your ATAPS mental health professional?</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied were you with the treatment you received from your ATAPS mental health professional?</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
</tr>
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Mental Health Nursing Incentive Program (MHnip)
783 occasions of service by 4 Mental Health Nurses

The Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program (MHNIP) is a community based mental health service provided by credentialed mental health nurses. It provides coordinated clinical care for people with severe and persistent mental disorders. These services are provided free of charge for providers in a range of settings, like clinics or patients’ homes.

This year saw an expansion of the service to Lithgow and the Blue Mountains and growth in the Penrith and Hawkesbury areas. Co-location of the MHNIP service at the LikeMind facility in Penrith has been a beneficial partnership, improving access to services for mental health customers.

Partners in Recovery
14,252 occasions of service

Partners in Recovery (PIR) assists people who have severe and persistent mental illness with complex needs. The program reaches people who normally “fall through the gaps”, including frequent presenters at hospital mental health units, and people experiencing homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, complex family circumstances and extreme financial or legal difficulties.

PIR provides a care coordination service to its consumer group, to help them access the services and supports needed to reach their recovery goals.
The program was developed and is governed by a local consortium of agencies comprising Nepean Blue Mountains PHN (lead agency), NBMLHD (Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Services), NSW Department of Family and Community Services, Aftercare, Flourish, Uniting Recovery and a consumer representative.

In 2015/16 the program supported 542 consumers, more than the previous two years combined. PIR continued to form partnerships and strengthen the links between various clinical and community support organisations. In support of this activity, PIR also delivered over 40 integration and capacity building projects during the year.

Just a small selection of the projects we worked on include:

- **the employment of sector liaison officer**, to identify and address barriers and system gaps for Aboriginal and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people in accessing appropriate mental health care.

- **an extensive training program**, with over 600 clinicians and community workers attending 20 courses and workshops.

- **an online navigation tool** developed in response to a significant need in the region for consumers and carers to be able to access the right mental health services to meet their needs quickly and easily.

- **wallet-sized mental health service cards** for the local region, with a generic version and customised versions for Aboriginal and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities.

- **wellness libraries** with over 10,000 resources established in 25 locations across the region, including hospital inpatient units, community mental health offices and neighbourhood centres.
**Outreach Clinics**

**857 individual consultations**

Nepean Blue Mountains PHN manages specialist paediatric outreach clinics that provide affordable services to Aboriginal families and families from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Both the number of outreach services and the number of patient consultations this year tripled (94 clinics were provided with 854 patient attendances) in response to regional health workforce shortages.

We established an additional fortnightly paediatrician clinic at Lithgow, a weekly speech pathology clinic at Portland Central School and Ear Nose and Throat consultations and surgery at Lithgow. These services complement our existing fortnightly psychiatrist clinic in Katoomba and paediatrician clinic in Lithgow.

All outreach services give priority access to Aboriginal children and adults and their families. They are made possible through partnerships with Lithgow Hospital and private specialists, with funding from the NSW Rural Doctors Network.

We continue to identify service gaps for specialist and allied health services, and work in partnership with local clinicians and health services to meet these needs.

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**Disaster Planning**

Since the October 2013 Blue Mountains bushfires, Wentworth Healthcare has been seen as a leader in developing the role of the GP in emergency management.

Nepean Blue Mountains PHN (NBMPHN) has worked with Dr Penny Burns (GP working in disaster medicine) and local GPs to develop a draft Discussion Paper titled Emergency Management: The Role of the GP. The paper was tabled at the General Practice Roundtable in July.

Our organisation has developed policies and procedures to support GPs to respond to disasters. Our participation in a mock disaster planning exercise undertaken by NSW Health provided the opportunity to trial these processes and procedures.

NBMPHN participates in the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District emergency management committee to ensure a region wide response.

We presented our work in disaster planning at the National Primary Healthcare Conference in November 2015 and localised policies have been shared with other PHNs.
Older Persons Health

Older Persons Consortium

Nepean Blue Mountains PHN (NBMPHN) along with Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District (NBMLHD), NSW Ambulance, Anglicare and NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation established a localised Older Persons Consortium. This has enabled partnerships with a variety of health service providers who care for older people in the Penrith region.

Key issues were identified from comprehensive feedback obtained at a consultative forum involving 70 participants and covering the perspectives of carers and 18 areas of service.

Immunisation

94% of non-Aboriginal children and 94.7% of Aboriginal children fully immunised by age 5

The Immunisation program is designed to play a role in reducing the incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases and complications within our region.

This year, 94% of non-Aboriginal children and 94.7% of Aboriginal children were fully immunised by age 5, which is above the 92% full immunisation rates set by NSW Health. The immunisation rate for one year old children increased to 91% placing the Nepean Blue Mountains region in the top third of PHNs nationally on this measure.

The St Marys local area in particular enjoyed a 2.9% increase in the immunisation rate from 87.2% in 2013-14 to 90.1% in 2014-15.

Nepean Blue Mountains PHN Practice Support and the NBMLHD Public Health Unit administered a cold chain audit with General Practice. Over 85% of practices participated in the audit and associated training.

NBMPHN’s continued and strengthened engagement with the NBMLHD Public Health Unit is evident in an agreement to share resources and provide joint CPD programs aimed at immunisers in the LHD and general practice. A joint research project, in collaboration with the University of Technology Sydney and the University of Sydney’s National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS), will examine vaccination attitudes in a local region with low immunisation coverage in children.
1,850 practice support activities were provided to 133 practices across our region

**General Practice**

Our General Practice Support (GPS) team provides support in areas of:

**Practice Management & Practice Nurses Network**

Peer support networks and education meetings are held throughout the year to assist non-clinical staff in addressing business challenges and training requirements, and support Practice Nurses in key areas such as immunisation, chronic disease management, health prevention and screening and wound management.

**Digital Health**

The GPS team has worked closely with computerised practices across the region to facilitate the uptake of secure messaging and eDischarge summaries from the acute care sector. Our region has also been one of only two to pilot the My Health Record opt-out trial in Australia (see more detail below).

**Data Management and Quality Improvement**

Data collection and analysis in general practice is an important tool in helping to monitor and manage better patient outcomes. We provide guidance on usage, data cleansing, recall and reminder management systems and chronic disease clinical audits.

Nepean Blue Mountains PHN (NBMPHN) has provided PEN clinical software licences to all interested practices across the region. Over 40% of practices are providing de-identified data to NBMPHN for region-wide quality improvement initiatives and benchmarking. Practice support officers are working with interested practices to support clinical and business opportunities.

**Accreditation**

Our GPS team provides guidance to general practices through the accreditation and re-accreditation process as defined by the RACGP Standards. Of the 138 practices across the region, 89 are accredited to the 4th Standard of General Practice. This represents more than 76% of the 116 computerised practices. The GPS team assists general practice by conducting mock surveys in preparation for the Accreditation Survey, in-practice training for administration staff such as Triage, Cold Chain and Infection Control.
Workforce

270 workforce recruitment consultations

Workforce shortage is one of the key challenges of delivering primary care services in our region.

In the past year we helped to recruit more than eight GPs, and 12 practice staff, one specialist and three allied health professionals to serve the region’s growing population.

In February 2016, the entire Blue Mountains LGA and large parts of the Penrith LGA were re-classified as District of Workforce Shortage (DWS). This is significant, as the DWS classification attracts more doctors to work in our area and assists us in filling some of the workforce shortage gaps we have in the provision of primary healthcare care services.

Nepean Blue Mountains PHN (NBMPHN) provides extensive services to local healthcare providers and practices to assist them in recruiting and retaining primary healthcare workforce. The services offered by the workforce program includes free listing of primary health care job vacancies on the NBMPHN website and also providing relevant advice regarding recruitment processes.

Allied Health

The Allied Health Stakeholder Engagement program aims to enhance and strengthen communication and collaboration between allied health and other healthcare professionals.

Throughout the year our focus has been on strengthening networks and communication channels between service providers. We use a variety of social media platforms to communicate with allied health including an online community with more than 60 local members, Twitter and regular news updates.

We have established formalised mechanisms for consultation and knowledge exchange through an Allied Health Stakeholder Group. The group meets up to four times a year, and the members are regularly called on to attend functions and events as allied health “Ambassadors”.

Allied health professionals are a highly mobile population, often working across multiple regions and sites, and in a variety of settings. We have begun a workforce mapping project to provide health planners with a deeper understanding of workforce distribution and the extent of our region’s workforce capacity to support local health needs in each LGA. This initiative involves significant provider consultation and partnership with peak bodies and various health services.

In partnership with Australian Health Professionals Australia, we presented a Digital Health Education Series for allied health providers, with more than 130 participants.

CPD & Events

1,461 attendees across 64 events

We work collaboratively with key education providers, peak bodies and primary healthcare professionals to develop and coordinate an ongoing program of accredited Continuing Professional Development (CPD) events for healthcare professionals across the region.

This year saw a more focused approach, with topics and themes tailored to our region’s health priorities and needs. We partnered with agencies such as the Local Health District, Registered Training Providers, universities and peak bodies to design and deliver events.

There was a significant focus on mental health education. Through the Partners in Recovery program we rolled out extensive high quality mental health training for a wide ranging audience.

In addition, we connected the health workforce to a wide range of externally-provided continuing professional development events and activities through our website and regular publications.

CPD Event Attendances by Profession

- Practice Staff
- Nurses
- Practice Managers
- GPs
- Allied Health (including Mental Health)
- Other (including NGO staff, police & paramedics)
My Health Record
350,000 people in the NBM region have a My Health Record.

My Health Record, is a secure online summary of a person’s health information such as allergies, treatments, medications and adverse reactions that can be accessed by healthcare practitioners chosen by the patient.

The Nepean Blue Mountains PHN (NBMPHN) region was selected as one of two PHN’s across Australia to trial a new approach to how people can get a My Health Record. Residents automatically had a My Health Record created for them unless they chose to opt-out. Federal Health Minister, Sussan Ley, launched the My Health Record at NBMPHN in March.

NBMPHN provided forums, online training and practice visits to support GPs and healthcare providers to connect and become conversant with uploading information to the record. 85% of accredited practices in our region are now able to upload information.

A phased community education campaign raised awareness of My Health Record especially among selected population groups such as older people, people with chronic disease and new parents. Face-to-face forums at local clubs and libraries as well as advertising and training sessions contributed to low opt out rates.

NBMPHN staff are working with pharmacists, specialists and allied health professionals to be able to access My Health Record. Work has also begun to connect residential aged care facilities to the record to ensure a seamless transmission of health information across healthcare providers to enhance the patient journey.

A decade of travelling vast distances and rugged terrain both in Australia and overseas has taught Ray & Lorraine Gardner to be prepared. Before setting off, their motorhome is checked for mechanical issues, food and water supplies are stocked, their phones are charged and their My Health Record information is up to date.

The retired couple from North Richmond signed up for the Personally Controlled Electronic Health Record (PECHR) as it was then known in 2012. Since then, they have shared the record with their local GP, Dr Michael Crampton, so he can add health information that can assist GPs or healthcare professionals in other states.

Now known as the My Health Record, the online health information is on the top of their travel preparations checklist. With a myriad of chronic health conditions between them ranging from diabetes to melanoma, a back fusion, a nerve operation and a penicillin allergy, they know that their health records are the key to other healthcare professionals being able to treat them effectively when they’re away from home. Their My Health Record is almost as valuable as taking their long-time trusted GP on holidays with them!

‘Dr Crampton is a fabulous GP but we can’t take him with us. My Health Record means he is never far away,” says Ray.

From as far away as Fremantle when a rash broke out, to Sale where Lorraine needed intravenous antibiotics to Albany where blood tests were required, the online health information summary means information can be viewed securely online, anywhere, anytime.

“You don’t need to worry about having to remember and repeat your health history like medicines, details of conditions and so on when you go to other doctors,” Lorraine says.

“Our health history travels with us. It gives us peace of mind so we can get on with enjoying the journey.”

- Ray & Lorraine Gardner
Advisory Committees

Community & Consumers
More than 30 dedicated health consumers and community representatives contributed to the design and delivery of programs and services across the region as part of our organisation’s joint health consumer engagement program with the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District (NBMLHD).

Health Consumer Working Groups in the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Lithgow and Penrith areas continued to grow in strength, with volunteer members helping us better understand the local community’s health needs.

Consumer representatives have been supported to attend training and conferences and new members are mentored by more experienced consumers.

The Working Groups link into a Community Advisory Committee (CAC). Up to 13 members from across the region contribute their experiences and those of their networks to help create a more connected, “whole” system in which GPs, the hospital system, other health professionals and consumers work together.

Members contribute to key initiatives, including our region’s My Health Record trial, mental health reforms, needs assessments and the Health Care Home trial.

Clinical Council
A Clinical Council has been established to guide the work of Wentworth Healthcare. The membership includes four General Practitioners, two Allied Health providers, a Practice Nurse, a Community Pharmacist, and specialist hospital clinicians from NBMLHD and Hawkesbury District Health Service.

The committee also includes a health consumer representative and a university/research expert. The Nepean Blue Mountains PHN CEO and NBMLHD CE are ex-officio members of the committees.

The Clinical Council is chaired by a GP and focuses on the “whole of region level” in regards to population health planning, needs assessment, prioritisation, commissioning of services and the development of clinical pathways.

General Practitioners
GPs play a central role in our work to improve the health of our communities. The GP Advisory Committee (GPAC) provides advice to our organisation to ensure GPs are supported in their day-to-day work and issues affecting General Practice in our region are addressed. Members from across the region raise and address issues relating to hospitals, after-hours GP services, GP education and training and key Government initiatives or changes impacting General Practice.

In addition to GPAC’s valuable work, NBMPHN has a number of other GP Clinical Advisors who share their knowledge and provide direction in many areas including Data Quality in General Practice, Aged Care, Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs.

Allied Health Stakeholder Group
We work with the Allied Health Stakeholder Group to identify ways of increasing integration between allied health general practices. The group comprises eight members from a number of disciplines and representation from each LGA.
Drawing on previous reports, consultations and data, Wentworth Healthcare developed a needs assessment to identify health needs and service gaps. This was enhanced by new health statistics and further in depth analysis focusing on mental health and drug and alcohol.

The engagement of a joint health planner position by the Nepean Blue Mountains PHN (NBMPHN) and the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District (NBMLHD) has enabled better sharing of data and will continue to facilitate more coordinated health planning across the primary and acute care sectors.

Cancer Screening

Cancer Screening plays an important role in the prevention and detection of cancer

Our 2016 population health needs assessment found that cancer screening participation is low in the Nepean Blue Mountains region compared to National and State screening rates.

NBMPHN is currently developing three cancer screening projects which will target LGAs and population groups with lowest screening rates.

NBMPHN was also successful in its grant applications to the Cancer Institute NSW to undertake two additional cancer screening and prevention projects in 2016-18. One project aims to improve access to colonoscopy services within NBMLHD public hospitals. The second aims to build capacity and systems that support cancer screening in primary care.

Research and Evaluation

Research plays an increasingly important role for the organisation. It informs how we identify and address health priorities and enables us to evaluate the success and efficacy of our programs.

We are excited to be partnering with local universities and health services on the research projects outlined below.

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<th>Research Project</th>
<th>Other Partners</th>
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<tr>
<td>Joint Consumer Engagement Strategy</td>
<td>NBMLHD &amp; Western Sydney University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syrian and Iraqi Refugee Health</td>
<td>Western Sydney University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immunisation and Complementary and Alternative Medicine practitioners</td>
<td>University of Technology, Sydney, University of Sydney, NBMLHD’s Public Health Unit.</td>
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