

Primary Health Networks

Primary Health Networks (PHNs) are not-for-profit organisations funded by the Commonwealth Government to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the primary healthcare services.



What are Primary Health Networks (PHNs)?

PHNs are independent organisations that work to strengthen primary healthcare in their region. They do this by assessing the needs of their community and commission local social and health services so that people can receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

1. Assessing Community Health Needs

- Analyse data and evidence to understand population health trends, identify at-risk groups, map existing services, and pinpoint gaps.
- Consult with community members, health professionals, service providers, and government to inform regional priorities.

2. Commissioning and Coordinating Services

- Plan, fund, and monitor primary care and mental health services to address identified health needs.
- Collaborate with local hospital networks and other partners to improve service coordination, efficiency, and quality.
- Aim to reduce duplication, improve care pathways, and prevent avoidable hospital visits.

3. Supporting and Building the Health Workforce

- Provide ongoing support to general practitioners, pharmacists, nurses, and allied health professionals.
- Deliver training, quality improvement initiatives, and resources to strengthen service delivery.
- Support workforce capacity, cultural competency, digital health adoption, and data-driven care.

18 Primary Health Networks nationally have been funded by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing to deliver the following pilots:

- Improving health system responses to family and domestic violence initiative.
- Supporting recovery.
- Supporting outreach healthcare for victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence (DFSV).

NSW/ACT PHN Consortium

Australian Capital Territory (ACTPHN)

- Trauma-informed DFSV training for primary care (GPs, dentists, and allied health professionals) on recognising early signs of DFSV and responding appropriately to disclosures.
- Tailored DFSV resources for primary care supporting facilitation of direct referrals from primary care providers.
- Delivery of DFSV training to medical/allied health students and staff across ACT Universities to support a new generation of health workforce in responding appropriately to DFSV.
- DFSV Link Worker Support Service providing secondary consultations, debriefing, and referral advice/support to primary care providers and enhancing service navigation for victim-survivors through facilitation of warm referrals to support services.

Central and Eastern Sydney (CESPHN)

- Training for primary care on recognising the signs of DFSV and responding to disclosures.
- DFSV Assist Navigator Service providing consultation and referral support to primary care providers.
- DFSV Health Assist providing a nurse practitioner and other healthcare services to women's refuges.

Hunter, New England and Central Coast (HNECCPHN)

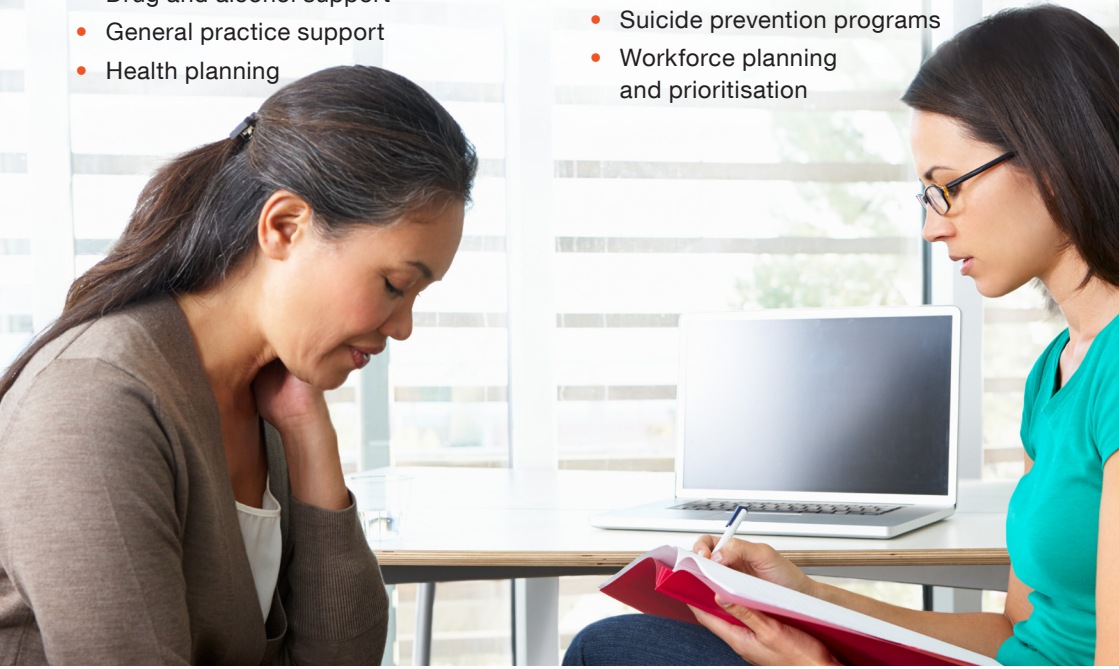
- DFSV Framework outlines HNECC's and primary care's role in addressing DFSV.
- Training for primary care on recognising the signs of DFSV and responding to disclosures.
- Local Link Program is a designated referral pathway for DFSV, supporting both primary care and the victim-survivor.
- Healthcare Outreach Program providing a multidisciplinary health response to women and children in refuge.
- Supporting Recovery Program providing a post-crisis, whole of family response via mental health services and care coordination.

Nepean Blue Mountains (NBMPHN)

- Delivery of DFSV and child sexual abuse (CSA) training to primary care, allied health professionals and medical students.
- DFSV/CSA Linkers who are a support and resource for primary care.
- Colocation at several general practices and Aboriginal medical services.
- Speech pathology services delivered to children and young people impacted by DFSV and/or homelessness.
- Actively engage with the DFSV sector through local interagency meetings and membership on the PHNs' DFSV programs steering committee.

Activities undertaken by PHNs

- Aboriginal health and wellbeing
- Allied health support
- Chronic and other health conditions
- COVID-19 support
- Digital health
- Disaster planning, response and recovery
- Domestic, family and sexual violence
- Drug and alcohol support
- General practice support
- Health planning
- Healthy ageing and palliative care
- Homelessness health access programs
- MyMedicare
- Mental health services and support
- Rural health access
- Urgent care clinics and after hours
- Suicide prevention programs
- Workforce planning and prioritisation



This is a joint initiative between **ACT, Central and Eastern Sydney, Hunter New England and Central Coast** and **Nepean Blue Mountains** Primary Health Networks.

phn
ACT

An Australian Government Initiative



phn
CENTRAL AND
EASTERN SYDNEY

An Australian Government Initiative



phn
HUNTER NEW ENGLAND
AND CENTRAL COAST

An Australian Government Initiative



phn
NEPEAN
BLUE MOUNTAINS

An Australian Government Initiative

