



MEDIA RELEASE

Demand for after-hours telehealth medical support

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Demand is growing for a free telehealth medical service offered across Gippsland, supporting people who need to see a doctor after-hours when their usual GP is unavailable.

Gippsland Primary Health Network commissioned HealthAccess 12 months ago to provide an after-hours service free to people who live in a Gippsland postcode and since then, it has delivered 389 consultations with positive feedback from patients.

Gippsland PHN Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Proposch, said the service was a “good news” story for the region, providing the Gippsland community with another option when they needed medical advice outside normal working hours.

“We know people don’t always get sick or need medical advice during the day when their usual general practice is open,” Ms Proposch said. “This service is helping fill that gap.”

HealthAccess is a designed solution to support community, general practices, local hospitals, Residential Aged Care Homes and ambulance services to manage increasing volumes of GP-Type Presentations in the after-hours period.

It supports people who need low acuity care, when it’s not an emergency and their usual GP is closed. This may include things from colds, flu and fever to allergic reactions, headaches, sporting injuries and COVID-19.

The patient’s regular GP is sent a summary of the consultation to ensure continuity of care.

Ms Proposch said the after-hours telehealth service was designed to support existing GPs, enabling their patients access to medical services after-hours if required.

“Medical needs after-hours don’t always require a visit to the hospital emergency department,” she said. “With HealthAccess, people can speak to a GP from their own home and will be triaged if the issue is urgent.”

People from all parts of Gippsland have used the service and provided positive feedback:



- “The service was tremendous”
- “I’m so appreciative of the support”
- “I will be using the service in the future”
- “Everyone was caring”

To use the service, people can call 1800 272 767 from:

- 6-10pm weeknights
- 12-10pm Saturdays
- 8am-6pm Sunday (and public holidays)

Ms Proposch said recent data showed that Gippsland had a low after-hours GP attendance and urged people to be aware of the range of services available.

“These figures show that by not using the after-hours services available, it will have an inevitable impact on the workload of hospital emergency departments. We want to keep these emergency departments free for those who really need them.”

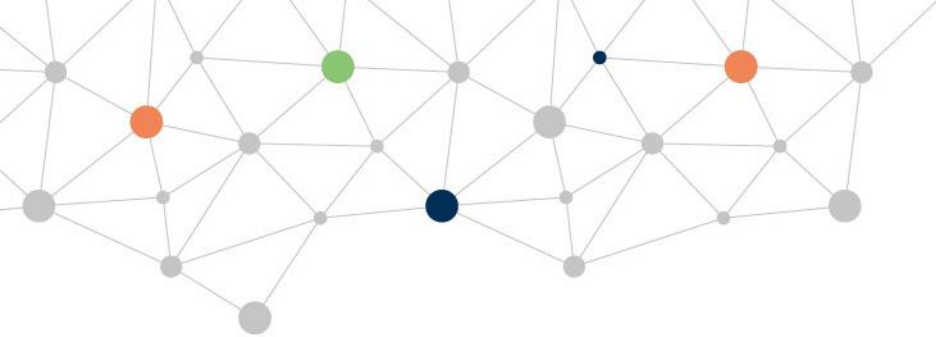
Gippsland PHN commissions a range of free after-hours services across the region in addition to HealthAccess.

“If you or someone you know needs medical support in the after-hours period and it’s urgent but not an emergency, you can get support wherever you live in the region,” Ms Proposch said. “We have two Primary Priority Care Centres in Warragul and Moe, an after-hours service offered by a consortium of local general practices in Wellington Shire and telehealth options.”

You can find out more details on the Gippsland PHN website at <https://gphn.org.au/what-we-do/programs/after-hours-program/>

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