



MEDIA RELEASE

Key factors to guide improved health outcomes in Gippsland

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Health inequalities will persist in Gippsland unless we address the social determinants of health according to Gippsland Primary Health Network (Gippsland PHN).

Gippsland PHN Acting Chief Executive Officer, Angela Jacob, said three new quarterly issues papers produced by the organisation highlighted important discussions needed to improve health outcomes for Gippsland.

“We know many people in Gippsland experience disadvantage that affects their health such as low income, lack of employment and pressures related to family and safety,” Ms Jacob said.

“These three papers - social determinants of health, improving population health and implementing value-based care – address the key factors that will guide and influence health system reform and align with our commitment to improving health outcomes for the people of Gippsland.

Research shows that social determinants can be more important than health behaviours or healthcare in influencing health.

People with poorer health outcomes include:

- People experiencing most disadvantage
- People in regional and remote areas
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
- People with a disability
- LGBTIQ+ people
- People from a multicultural background
- People with mental health and/ or alcohol and other drug issues

Factors that lead to delays in seeking healthcare or avoiding treatment altogether include:

- Cost for the service



- Lack of transport
- Discomfort sharing personal information for fear of judgement
- A lack of information about available options for care
- Digital barriers
- Time pressures may prevent a discussion about prevention and holistic
- Pressures related to caring and family responsibilities and seeking financial security and safety are prioritised over health care.

In Gippsland, 15.4% of children under 16 years live in low income, welfare dependent families compared to the Victorian average of 9.3%. Data also show that 23.3% of people in Gippsland have less than \$650 in weekly household income compared to the Victorian average of 16.4%. Low income affects how, where and when people access health services.

A population health approach recognises that health is shaped by a range of factors with social determinants the most important driver, followed by health behaviours and lifestyles, places and communities, and integrated health and care systems.

Mrs Jacob said Gippsland PHN used a population health planning approach when seeking to achieve its vision.

“We incorporate data into the health needs assessment to describe and understand inequities and priority populations and incorporate equity considerations in the commissioning process,” she said.

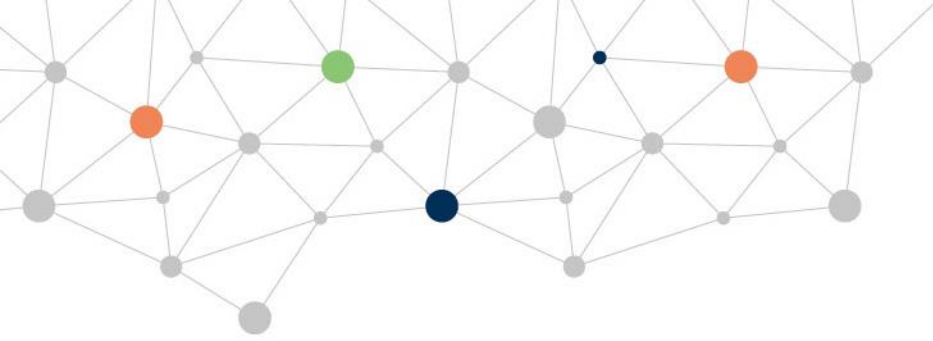
“We look to fund holistic models of care, co-designed to meet community health and wellbeing needs and are working to support integration of the health system.”

Other initiatives include the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2025 and a Climate Change Adaption Strategy, primary care education and training, supporting general practice with Strengthening Medicare initiatives and advocating for policy and system change at local, state and national levels.

Gippsland PHN is committed “to embedding value-based healthcare principles into its work with community to achieve a measurable improvement in health outcomes, fostering a healthier and more vibrant population with reduced health disparities.

“Value-based health care is focused on the outcomes that matter to patients relative to the costs required to achieve those outcomes,” Mrs Jacob said.

“Shifting to value-based payment models can help move the health care system from volume to value. It promotes patient-centred care and improves patient satisfaction.



“Clinicians focus on their area of expertise, leading to increased job satisfaction and less burnout.”

Gippsland PHN’s ‘Theory for Change for Value-based Health Care’ is a seven-step plan which starts by conducting a comprehensive assessment of the community’s health needs. It involves a diversity of stakeholders to identify health priorities and design potential solutions.

Mrs Jacob urged the community to provide feedback to the papers. “We need the community to be involved in these important discussions around health reform.”

You can find the new priority issues papers on the [Gippsland PHN website](#).

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