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## Do you know where to go when your doctor is closed this Holiday Season?

Did you know that injuries due to preventable accidents spike during the Christmas-New Year period? If you or your family find yourself with a non life-threatening illness or injury this festive season, the emergency department is not your only option.

Wentworth Healthcare, the provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network, is encouraging residents in the Hawkesbury to consider after hours or urgent care services rather than presenting to a hospital.

Wentworth Healthcare CEO, Lizz Reay, said that many people are unaware of the alternative options available outside of their GP's regular office hours or when their illness or injury feels urgent but not severe enough for the emergency department.

“If you need medical help after hours, on weekends, or over the holidays, the **Doctor Closed website** can help you find GPs who offer after hours care, as well as your closest urgent care clinic or service.”

In the Hawkesbury area, the **NSW Health funded North Richmond Urgent Care Service** is open 365 days a year, including Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day, from 8am to 8pm. The service provides bulk-billed healthcare to people who need urgent but non-critical care when their GP is not available.

“The service helps reduce pressure on emergency departments by treating people whose illnesses or injuries are non life-threatening and can be seen by a GP, ensuring the community receives prompt care without a long wait in emergency departments.” said Ms Reay.

“To access the service, people need to call **Healthdirect on 1800 022 222**. A registered nurse will assess your condition and then refer you to the best place for your needs. This may include an in-person appointment at the North Richmond Urgent Care Service or a telehealth appointment with the virtualKIDS or virtualGP services, or escalating your care to NSW Ambulance if required,” said Ms Reay.

For those who can travel, a walk-in after hours GP clinic is available in Penrith, located at **Nepean Village Shopping Centre**. It is open Monday to Friday, 6:00 PM to midnight, and on weekends and public holidays, 3:00 PM to midnight. The Doctor Closed website can also provide information on GPs who may have extended hours during the holiday period, and after-hours pharmacies, such as **Penrith 24-Hour Pharmacy located** at 438 High Street, Penrith, which is also open all day, every day, including Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Years Day.

In addition to these services, Ms Reay mentioned that if you or someone you know are experiencing mental health concerns or crisis during the festive season, to remember that the **Hawkesbury Head to Health (Medicare Mental Health)** service is available for walk-in support without the need of a prior appointment. It is located at 1 Musson Lane, Richmond and is open Monday-Wednesday and Friday 1:00pm to 5:00pm, Thursday and Saturday 1:00pm to 7:00pm, and public holidays (including Christmas, Boxing and New Years Day) 1:00pm to 7:00pm.



“We’re proud to fund after hours services to help our community access timely care and avoid the strain on our region’s hospitals, especially during the busy holiday period,” said Ms. Reay.

“I encourage everyone to visit [www.DoctorClosed.com.au](http://www.DoctorClosed.com.au) to find out what other local healthcare options are available,” Ms Reay concluded.

## Further information if needed like event details

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