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Wentworth Healthcare Launches New Strategic Plan for 2024-2029

Wentworth Healthcare, the provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network, has launched its new [2024-2029 Strategic Plan](#) which outlines the organisation's strategic objectives and intended outcomes for the next five years.

With a vision for the 'community to experience better health and wellbeing' through a mission to 'empower primary healthcare providers to deliver high-quality, accessible and integrated care that meets the needs of the community', the new Plan sets the strategic framework for the next chapter of the not-for-profit organisation.

Wentworth Healthcare works across the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Lithgow and Penrith local government areas and is one of 31 Primary Health Networks (PHNs) nationally. PHNs receive grants from the Federal Government to establish and fund non-hospital healthcare services in the community, to support local GPs and other primary care providers to deliver quality care and to improve the local healthcare journey for patients as they move from one health system to another.

Wentworth Healthcare CEO, Ms Lizz Reay, said she was proud to launch the new Plan after extensive consultation with staff, stakeholders and community representatives.

"Our new 2024-2029 Strategic Plan builds on the strengths and outcomes of our 2019-2024 Strategic Plan and incorporates our learnings from an unprecedented five years in health," said Ms Reay.

"We recognise the challenges our primary healthcare providers and community have faced since 2019. During multiple disasters and the pandemic, as an organisation we showed how agile and responsive we can be in times of crisis and proved our value in the local healthcare system," she said.

"During the bushfires and floods, we helped provide critical services such as GP volunteers for evacuation centres, information and resources to health professionals during emergencies, increased mental health services, Disaster Grants for health professionals to better prepare for future emergencies and Community Wellbeing Grants to help our community recover," said Ms Reay.

"During the pandemic we played a vital role by providing up-to-date clinical information to health professionals, establishing COVID-19 testing and vaccination centres, funding additional local mental health services and more. During all these events, we also advocated to both state and federal governments for the needs of local health professionals and our community," she said.

The organisation's new Plan focuses on the key objectives of excellence and impact, building a skilled and influential local primary care workforce, delivering integrated, quality-focused health services and engaging with, and empowering, the community.

Wentworth Healthcare Board Chair, Mr Gary Smith AM, said that the new plan provides a roadmap for how the organisation will serve the region's changing health needs into the future.

"Our 2024-2029 Strategic Plan ensures that our collective energy as an organisation is focussed on helping to deliver a more efficient, equitable, integrated and patient-centred health system that



meets the needs of our growing community and that our work continues to be outcome-based and sustainable,” said Mr Smith.

“Our significant local knowledge, together with the relationships we have fostered with our community, service providers and partners, means that we understand the needs of our region and are well placed to provide innovative local health solutions, working with others in the sector,” he said.

Mr Smith went on to say that Wentworth Healthcare’s strong cross-sector collaboration was a key achievement of their 2019-2024 Strategic Plan.

“One example of how we work with others, is our relationship with key partner Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District. Building on our formal Memorandum of Understanding and our Joint Community Advisory Committee, we established the Joint Boards’ Integrated Health and Wellbeing Committee in 2019,” said Mr Smith.

“This joint governance was crucial in helping us to work closely together to integrate our local health response during our region’s multiple disasters and the pandemic,” he said.

Mr Smith added that together, Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District and Wentworth Healthcare had delivered a [Joint Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan for 2021-2026](#), which has helped facilitate many joint projects. An example was the colocation of NSW Health funded suicide prevention service SafeHaven, into the Commonwealth funded Penrith Head to Health Centre, helping improve the overall experience of those accessing mental health support.

“In 2024-2029, we look forward to building on these cross-sector relationships to provide more accessible and cohesive health services that deliver quality health outcomes for our community,” he said.

Funding non-hospital local healthcare services based on community need, is one of the key objectives of the national PHN program. Ms Reay said that she was proud of what the organisation had achieved over their last two Strategic Plans and particularly of the services they had been able to establish locally.

Some examples of new services established include, in mental health two new headspace youth services in Katoomba and Hawkesbury, and two Head to Health adult services in Penrith and Hawkesbury as well as numerous community wellbeing projects funded through grants to address impacts of drought, bushfires and floods. For older people, they introduced WiseMind mental health support for people living in residential aged care homes, Compassionate Communities initiatives to address social isolation and a Care finder service for older people needing help finding aged care services. They increased the region’s access to alcohol and other drugs support by expanding services at Dianella Cottage Lithgow, opening a WHOS service in Penrith and two Street University youth services in Penrith and Katoomba.

“We are proud of what we have achieved over the last five years and of the services we have been able to bring to the region, sometimes in difficult circumstances. But there is more work to be done,” said Ms Reay.

“Over the next five years, we remain committed to building the capability of our people, providers and partners to help us deliver on our vision of better health and wellbeing for the people living in our region,” she said.

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