

Communique

Progress update on the development of a Territory-wide Health Service Plan

September 2020

Overview

The ACT Health Directorate is developing a Territory-Wide Health Service Plan (the Plan). The Plan is a key deliverable under the recently released *Accessible, Accountable, Sustainable: A Framework for the ACT Public Health System 2020-2030* and will identify priorities for development and redesign of public health services across the ACT over the next five to 10 years.

The Plan will be based on a comprehensive assessment of health service needs across the care continuum on a geographic basis and for priority population groups. It will consider the range of public health services provided by Canberra Health Services, Calvary Public Hospital Bruce, other organisations in the community as well as public hospital services that ACT residents access interstate.

Between November 2019 and March 2020, approximately 80 consultation sessions were held with stakeholders from Canberra Health Services, Calvary Public Hospital Bruce, non-government organisations (NGO) funded by ACT Health Directorate including service providers, peak and consumer and carer advocacy groups as well as with local aged care providers. Approximately 500 participants attended consultation sessions during this phase of engagement.

Further consultation and engagement with consumers and carers, the community and health service providers during March-June 2020 was put on hold whilst the health system turned its attention to COVID-19 response activities. Development of the Plan nevertheless remains a high priority and work has continued with research and analysis to support prioritisation of strategies and actions. A revised work program has now been developed for consultation on a draft of the Plan in late 2020.

Following the completion of the Plan, more detailed specialty or service plans will be progressed where further detail is required to inform development or redesign of services. Work has already started on plans for both child and adolescent and mental health services. A Canberra Health Services Clinical Services Plan is also being developed concurrently and will be used to inform development of a Master Plan for Canberra Hospital.

What we have heard from consultation activities so far

Our first phase of consultations included sessions with all clinical areas across Canberra Health Services, targeted sessions with clinical staff at Calvary Public Hospital Bruce, ACT Health Directorate funded non-government organisations and local aged care providers.

Consultations with ACT Health Directorate funded non-government organisations and local aged care providers – what we heard

Key priorities highlighted through our sessions with NGOs and local aged care providers include:

- There is a need for improved referral pathways, communication and transitions between hospital and community-based services including between public and NGO provided health services and aged care services
- The importance of supporting the sustainability of our ACT Health Directorate funded NGO services to meet the needs of our growing population
- We need to have a greater focus on prevention and early intervention
- Infrastructure challenges including ageing physical and ICT infrastructure and the need to improve building accessibility
- Limited access to bulk-billing GPs and subsequent equity issues relating to access to primary health care
- Service gaps generated by transition to NDIS and more limited NDIS eligibility criteria
- There is a need to improve awareness amongst some areas of our hospital and health services of the range of health services provided by NGOs

Consultations with Canberra Health Services – what we heard

Key priorities highlighted through our sessions with Canberra Health Services include:

- There is a need to improve transitions of care between hospital and community-based services, between local and interstate services and between paediatric and adult services including improved care coordination and care navigation
- There is a need to strengthen links with community health service providers, carer networks and organisations
- We need to clearly define and formalise current and future directions for which services will be provided at a local, Territory wide and regional level and support care closest to home wherever possible and appropriate
- There is increasing pressure on acute hospital services including outpatient clinics and there are opportunities to reduce bed block and shift the focus of care to the community but there is also a need to ensure the sustainability of existing services in line with our growing and ageing population
- There are opportunities to improve care pathways to both support people to transition out from specialist care back to primary care and to avoid unnecessary

referrals to specialist services that are placing increasing pressure on outpatient clinics

- There is a need for a focus on strengthening the capacity and capability of our clinical support services, including allied health, pharmacy, pathology and imaging
- There is a need to work with health services in surrounding NSW communities to support care closer to home and transitions between hospital and community
- There is a need for improved focus on research, training, education and workforce planning to support current and future sustainability of services and the development of services locally
- There are opportunities to support sustainability of services and growing demand through workforce substitution models
- There is a need to improve integration of our clinical information systems and access to data to support clinical decision making, operational management and service planning

Consultations with Calvary Public Hospital Bruce – what we heard

Key priorities highlighted through our sessions with Calvary Public Hospital Bruce include:

- There are opportunities to prevent hospitalisation, address barriers to discharge and shift the focus of services into the community to support integrated models of care for people with chronic conditions and older persons, including potential for colocation with Canberra Health Services and NGO service providers
- There are opportunities for improving capability in other selected key service specialties to improve self-sufficiency, improve patient flow and reduce avoidable transfers to Canberra Hospital
- There is a need to establish and/or strengthen clinical networks across the Territory and region in key service areas such as emergency departments, intensive care, maternity, cancer services and neurology (in particular stroke services)
- There is a need to increase access to and integration of health services for older people across the ACT
- There is a need to strengthen and improve access to clinical support services including allied health and medical imaging
- There are opportunities to improve access to surgical services and improve the capacity and capability of existing services
- There are opportunities to improve integration of palliative care services across the Territory
- There have been flow on effects from the establishment of the University of Canberra Hospital for access to rehabilitation services at Calvary Public Hospital Bruce and for patient pathways to rehabilitation services
- There are services currently being provided through outpatient clinics that should or could be managed by a GP with alternate models including consultation liaison

Emerging themes for the Territory-wide Health Service Plan

Through our consultation sessions, analysis of population growth and distribution, health status and burden of disease and trends and projections in health service activity, the themes and priorities that have been identified for the Plan to date include:

Transitions of Care

Improving transitions between hospital and community including NGO, NDIS and aged care services, between paediatric and adult services, between specialist and primary care, between ACT and NSW, between different services for patients with complex comorbidities, care closer to home through maximising use of community health facilities and ongoing expansions to Hospital In The Home, care navigation and care coordination

Our role as a local, Territory and regional service provider

Defining our commitments to provision of services to surrounding NSW communities and ensuring these arrangements are safe and sustainable, strengthening clinical networks for Territory-wide and regional services, increasing capacity of northside hospital services to meet the growing needs of their catchment and increased capability for selected services, reversing flows to NSW in key general medical and surgical services, improving access to services locally through increased capacity and capability in specialist medical, surgical and paediatric services and strengthening interstate shared care arrangements, establishing research, education and training priorities to build for the future, defining our role in justice health services

Strengthening Core Services

Building Genetic and Genomic Medicine into a core clinical service, increasing capacity for pharmacy services in hospital and community, improving access to allied health services in hospital and community, increasing capability of clinical support services at the University of Canberra Hospital, redevelopment of pathology infrastructure and technology, workforce substitution models for services currently provided by medical specialists that could be covered by allied health

Addressing key areas of service demand and reform

Implementing health service reforms from the first 1000 days strategy, managing capacity for surgical and ICU services prior to SPIRE commissioning, managing capacity for medical services as an interim measure and accommodating future growth for medical, surgical, ED and other services. Establishing a prioritised program for clinical service plans, with a child and adolescent clinical services plan and a mental health services plan underway and clinical service planning for alcohol and other drugs services, sexual health, cancer services, rehab, surgical services identified as priorities for the next phase of service planning. Service development and redesign recommended for palliative care, pain management, eating disorders, dermatology, rheumatology, obesity services and services for patients with behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia

Next steps

The ACT Health Directorate is working to develop a draft of the Territory-wide Health Service Plan for consultation in late 2020. The format of these consultations will be dependent on the status of the COVID-19 recovery plan at that time, however we intend undertake focus groups with consumers and carers, further engagement with clinical services, NGO services including consumer and carer advocacy and peak organisations.

Further information regarding these consultations will be made available in the coming months.

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