NT Health Workforce Priority Areas Update
February 2020

Health Workforce Needs Assessment

The Health Workforce Needs Assessment (HWNA) is an activity under the Rural Health Workforce Support Activity (RHWSA) funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and managed by Northern Territory Primary Health Network (NT PHN).

Priority Areas for the Rural Health Workforce Support Activity

Priority areas for activity under the RHWSA have been developed by the Health Workforce Stakeholder Group (HWSG) in response to information gathered in the ongoing health workforce needs assessment process. These priorities are reviewed annually and reflect:

1. Geographic locations of greatest need

2. Health workforce disciplines of greatest need

3. Strategic areas of greatest need.

These priorities and strategies are the focus of the NT PHN's Needs Assessment Report and Activity Work Plan, which are deliverables under NT PHN's RHWSA funding agreement with the Australian Government Department of Health.

These priority areas and the strategies developed will continue to inform the 2020–21 Activity Work Plan for NT PHN under the RHWSA.

1   GEOGRAPHIC

At the recent meeting of HWSG in January 2020, the key decisions regarding the geographic priorities for the RHWSA were reviewed and confirmed. The application of the nationally consistent approach to HWNA to the Northern Territory's population clearly defines all remote primary health services as high or extreme risk. The HWSG agreed to geographical prioritisation of all remote primary health care services. Due to the consistent

nature of workforce issues across the 80+ remote primary health care services in the Northern Territory, it is acknowledged that need for health professionals' changes quickly, and thus priorities within this group should be determined at an operational level. It was agreed, however, that general practice would be subject to geographic prioritisation and the HWNA identifies these priorities.

Geographic Priorities
All remote Aboriginal community controlled health care services
All Aboriginal community controlled health services serving the Aboriginal populations in Darwin and Alice Springs
General practices in remote locations MMM 6 and 7 and Darwin urban fringe communities – Howard Springs, Humpty Doo, Weddell, Alligator

2 DISCIPLINE

Occupation Priorities
Remote Area Nurses, Mental Health Nurses, Psychologists, Mental Health Occupational Therapists, Social Workers and Audiologists

3 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority Area 1: Develop the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce – Clinical and Non-clinical
1.1   Define and support a range of pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into careers within the primary health care team
1.2   Build and support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner workforce
1.3   Develop and support all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in and supporting health

Priority Area 2: Develop pathways into and through health careers
2.1 Identify and clearly articulate and promote pathways into and through NT health careers
2.2 Address gaps in pathways and maximise opportunities to 'grow our own' health professionals
2.3   Develop mechanisms for coordinating and maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of pathways
2.4   Target local students from high school/VET/undergraduate cohorts

Priority Area 3: Attract, maintain and retain workforce within the Northern Territory

3.1   Develop targeted marketing and recruitment activities
3.2   Develop career opportunities through continuing professional development and skill-building
3.3   Develop strategies to support the workforce and reduce turnover

Priority Area 4: Develop locally responsive, sustainable models of care

4.1   Support activities that develop the quality of leadership and management
4.2   Support activities that build capacity in organisations to become 'employers of choice'
4.3   Facilitate organisations to explore successful and sustainable service models
4.4 Identify and address emerging workforce needs