



Victorian Primary Health Networks

Supporting joint planning and action for population health improvement - Information for partners

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide information for health services, community health services, local government, and Primary Care Partnerships that are supporting population health planning and implementation activities. This is in response to requirements of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Policy and Funding Guidelines 2017/18.

Context

The DHHS Policy and Funding Guidelines 2017/18 outlined expectations to support joined up approaches to population health planning and implementation. Specific details of the guidelines are as follows.

Details - DHHS Policy and Funding Guidelines 2017/18

- i. Population health partners include health services, community health services, local governance, Primary Care Partnerships and Primary Health Networks.
- ii. Partners will be expected to reorient planning and implementation activities around common priority areas, aligning with the legislated Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans in local catchment areas.
- iii. It is strongly recommended that increasing healthy eating and activity living is prioritised as a key area for action.
- iv. Provide evidence to demonstrate conduct of the following:
 - a. Collectively engage in identifying and acting on local priorities and how they will reorient their future planning processes and activities to coordinate efforts to improve population health in the local area
 - b. Development of a single population catchment report developed by local partners (recommended).¹

About Primary Health Networks

Six Primary Health Networks (PHNs) operate Victoria and work towards increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of health services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes; and improving coordination of care to ensure patients receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time. The six Victorian PHNs serve a defined geographical catchment. These catchments are unique in a range of ways, spanning diverse populations, service contexts, communities of need, and rural expanses that reach state borders. For many PHNs, local reach and the focus on place is achieved through networked regionally based governance structures (e.g. clinical and community advisory councils), PHNs offices and staffed teams, and other collaborative mechanisms.

¹ Policy and Funding Guidelines – Volume 2, Chapter 1 <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/policy-and-funding-guidelines>, p. 36.



PHN as commissioners – Role in population health planning and implementation

Primary Health Networks currently work across population catchments to understand and respond to local needs. This involves:

- examination of the health and social needs of local communities
- development of better practice models of care to guide commissioning
- supporting the primary care workforce, with a focus on quality and improvement
- facilitating health system integration among professionals, organisations, and sectors.

In line with this, the PHNs develop and maintain a Health Needs Assessment (i.e. population profiles covering health and social care needs) for the local population catchment. The Health Needs Assessment draws on a range of quantitative and qualitative evidence (e.g. health datasets, service data, and consultation insights). The Health Needs Assessment informs the development of PHN Activity Work Plans that are generally prepared and finalised in the third quarter of a given financial year (i.e. March-May of a calendar year). The Activity Work Plans highlight the priorities identified and the PHN activities planned.

Considering PHN boundaries, the six PHNs will inevitably collaborate with a number of partners to undertake population health planning and implementation efforts.

To support partners in formulating a plan of action in response to DHHS Policy and Funding Guidelines 2017/18, the PHNs would like to outline the following:

People	Process	Systems
<p>i. There will be nominated contacts available at each of the PHNs to support joint population health planning efforts (refer overleaf).</p> <p>ii. There is merit in utilising local governance arrangements which may support collective planning and oversight. It is noted that there are several existing structures in place supported by the PHNs.</p>	<p>i. There is a need to map out organisational population health planning and reporting cycles, and explore opportunities for achieving alignment where possible.</p> <p>ii. The PHNs have prepared publicly accessible versions of Health Needs Assessments and Activity Work Plans. These experiences may inform the development of a single catchment report.</p>	<p>i. Qualitative data and qualitative insights are foundational to evidence-informed population health planning. There is the potential to further pool contributions of existing data to build further depth of understanding of need.</p> <p>ii. There is merit in exploring opportunities to leverage community consultation for shared interests.</p>



PHN contacts are as follows (current as at October 2017)

PHN	Chief Executive Officer	Key contact
Eastern Melbourne PHN (03) 9046 0300	Robin Whyte, CEO robin.whyte@emphn.org.au	Jodi Briggs Executive Director Innovation and Integration jodi.briggs@emphn.org.au
Gippsland PHN (03) 5126 2899	Marianne Shearer, CEO marianne.Shearer@gphn.org.au	Liz Craig Manager Health Planning, Research and Evaluation liz.craig@gphn.org.au
Murray PHN (03) 5441 7806	Matt Jones, CEO mjones@murrayphn.org.au	Anne Somerville Executive Director Systems and Innovation Development asomerville@murrayphn.org.au
North Western Melbourne PHN (03) 9347 1188	Adj Ass Prof Chris Carter, CEO christopher.carter@nwmpnhn.org.au	Melanie Chisholm Director, Population Health and Procurement melanie.chisholm@nwmpnhn.org.au
South Eastern Melbourne PHN 1300 331 981	Dr Elizabeth Deveny, CEO elizabeth.deveny@semphn.org.au	Chris Wood General Manager, System Outcomes chris.wood@semphn.org.au
Western Victoria PHN (03) 5222 0800	Dr Leanne Beagley, CEO leanne.beagley@westvicphn.com.au	Kate Barlow Deputy CEO kate.barlow@westvicphn.com.au

PHN boundaries are available [here](#) and a [concordance](#) file contains further details.^{2, 3}

² PHN boundaries: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/phn-boundaries>

³ PHN concordance file <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/PHN-Concordances>