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Federal Health Minister launches new mental health program for Canberrans

The Minister for Health, The Hon Greg Hunt MP, has launched a program to help Canberrans experiencing significant mental health challenges. Individualised support will be provided through the National Psychosocial Support Measure (NPSM) to assist people in their recovery.

Minister for Health, Greg Hunt said the National Psychosocial Support Measure played a critical role when it came to tackling mental health.

"This funding supports people with severe mental illness increase their ability to do everyday activities by providing a range of non-clinical community based services. The proficiency and human kindness the NPSM displays in helping those experiencing mental illnesses is remarkable. The Morrison Government is investing \$24 million this year, and \$80 million over four years to 2021, nationwide in the NPSM. The Government stands with the NPSM in doing everything we can to support all Australians experiencing mental health issues," said Minister Hunt.

Capital Health Network Chief Executive, Adj Prof Gaylene Coulton said the program would operate across the ACT to provide support to people with significant mental ill health.

"The PHN program will support Canberrans who face barriers to achieving positive mental health outcomes by supporting them to build confidence, resilience, engage in meaningful activities such as employment and study, and to build and sustain relationships. The program will ensure individuals are supported to improve and maintain mental health to prevent the need for more intensive and acute health services," said Adj Prof Coulton.

Capital Health Network, through the ACT PHN Program and in partnership with ACT Health, has engaged Flourish Australia (Bloom Healthy Living Program) and Woden Community Services (New Path Program) to deliver this much-needed service.

"Woden Community Service is very pleased to be rolling out *New Path*, our mental health recovery program, as we have a long history of providing community-based mental health services. New Path is an early intervention service for people who have been seriously affected by mental health issues for the first time. We will support people in their recovery towards greater self-reliance, independence and participation which helps to reduce the need for more intense and acute health services," said Ms Jenny Kitchin, CEO of Woden Community Service.

Flourish Australia is providing the support through their *Bloom Healthy Living Program*.

"Flourish Australia is proud to provide one-on-one support to assist people with significant mental illness to build life skills, including maintaining mental health, managing finances and engaging in education, employment or volunteering. We're working with local community connections to help people have optimal mental health," said Mr Matthew Salen, Area Manager, Flourish Australia.

People with significant mental health challenges living, working or studying in the ACT (aged 18-64 years) who are not eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme can access the programs.

The Commonwealth Government and ACT Government have committed bilateral funding to the NPSM within the ACT to a total value of \$3.3 million from July 2018 until July 2021.