



## MEDIA RELEASE – Embargoed until 6am, 18 October 2021

### New mental health service to support Canberrans during pandemic

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Today the new “Head to Health Pop Up” service has commenced, during Mental Health Month, to support the mental health of Canberrans struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Capital Health Network (CHN) CEO Megan Cahill said the free service will help guide Canberrans through the process of finding the right local support for them with no need for a referral or appointment.

“The extra pressures of isolation, home schooling, loss of income and the uncertainty of the pandemic is taking its toll. Canberrans can simply call Head to Health Pop Up to discuss their concerns with a trained mental health professional. Telehealth appointments will be available from Monday 18 October with COVID-safe face-to-face appointments becoming available later in November,” said Ms Cahill.

CHN, ACT’s Primary Health Network commissioned Think Psychology Solutions to deliver the Head to Health Pop Up until 30 June 2022, following \$1.6 million in funding from the Australian Government as part of its response to the current pandemic.

Senator the Hon. Zed Seselja welcomed the establishment of the Head to Health Pop Up service.

“I encourage anyone experiencing mental health issues to reach out and seek help. Mental health issues should be treated just like physical injuries, the earlier they are dealt with the better,” said Senator Seselja.

Local mental health services will be further expanded in December 2021 when a new Head to Health Centre for adults will commence in the ACT, one of eight pilot centres established around Australia. CHN has commissioned Think Psychology Solutions to also deliver this centre, supported by \$10.5 million in funding from the ACT PHN through the Australian Government’s PHN Program.

“As a large private multidisciplinary mental health provider in Canberra, we have the experience and capability to provide clinical assessment and interventions. We’re proud to be involved in this new service and will work with the local community to ensure Head to Health complements existing mental health services,” said Vanessa Hamilton, Clinical Director of Think Psychology Solutions.

Head to Health hubs are staffed by multidisciplinary teams including psychologists, mental health workers and social workers. They will offer free video and phone supported mental health and assessment services, as well as COVID-safe face-to-face support. Call **1800 595 212** or go to <https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/popup>