

CAPITAL HEALTH NETWORK'S COMMISSIONING FRAMEWORK



phn
ACT

An Australian Government Initiative

**Capital
Health
Network**
Partnering for better health



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Capital Health Network acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the Traditional Custodians of the ACT and surrounding region, and recognises other people and families with connection to the lands of the ACT. We acknowledge their continuing culture and the ongoing contribution they make to the life of Canberra. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and we thank them for caring for the lands on which we live, work, learn and play.

We extend this respect and gratitude to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands across Australia.

Capital Health Network (CHN) is the ACT Primary Health Network (PHN), one of 31 PHNs in Australia established under the [Australian Governments Primary Health Network Programme](#) on 1 July 2015. PHNs are independent organisations established to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of health services, especially for those who may be at risk of poorer health outcomes by improving how care is coordinated so people get the right care in the right place at the right time.

The purpose of PHNs is to assess the health care needs for their local community and to commission health services to meet those needs, whilst also working within the health system to minimise gaps or duplication.

Primary Health Networks (PHNs) deliver 3 core functions as outlined in the [PHN Strategy \(2023-2024\)](#):

Commissioning

An ongoing cycle of developing and implementing services through needs assessments, planning, collaboration, funding, monitoring and evaluation.



Capacity building

Strengthening the skills, knowledge, processes and resources that our workforce, communities and our primary care system need to survive, adapt and thrive in the future.



Coordination

Organising people, information and partners through the delivery of projects and programs that address identified priorities and outcomes.



PHNs receive funding from the Commonwealth Government to support:

- overhead corporate governance
- non-administrative health system improvement activities
- program funding to deliver specific activities across the areas of scope.

The areas of scope include:

Core funding

- Population health
- Practice support
- Digital health
- Emergency preparedness

Program funding

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health (ITC)
- Alcohol and other drugs
- Mental health and suicide prevention
- Health services in aged care
- Medicare Urgent Care Clinics
- Pilots and targeted programs such as:
 - Palliative care
 - Family Domestic and Sexual Violence
 - Bulk Billing Initiative
 - Workforce
 - Emergency response
 - Endometriosis and Long-acting reversible contraception

This framework explains to our community and stakeholders how CHN uses commissioning to achieve the PHN objectives to address the priorities we identified and developed specifically for our region.

2 Capital Health Network

CHN defines primary care as health care that people access in their community, such as GPs, pharmacies, allied health professionals, and community-sector health services.

CHN delivers our work through 3 core functions; commissioning, capacity building and coordination, as outlined in our [Strategic Plan 2025-2027](#). These 3 functions align with health care reform initiatives and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing's "PHN Strategy 2023-24".

CHN's vision is for a connected health system that supports the health and wellbeing of people in the ACT.

Our vision is a health system that delivers:



- improved health outcomes, especially for people at increased risk of poor health
- a stable, satisfied and sustainable primary health care workforce
- a positive experience of care for consumers and improved access for people experiencing barriers to care
- value for money.



Our mission is to use local knowledge to make primary health care more accessible and effective, to enhance health for everyone in the ACT.



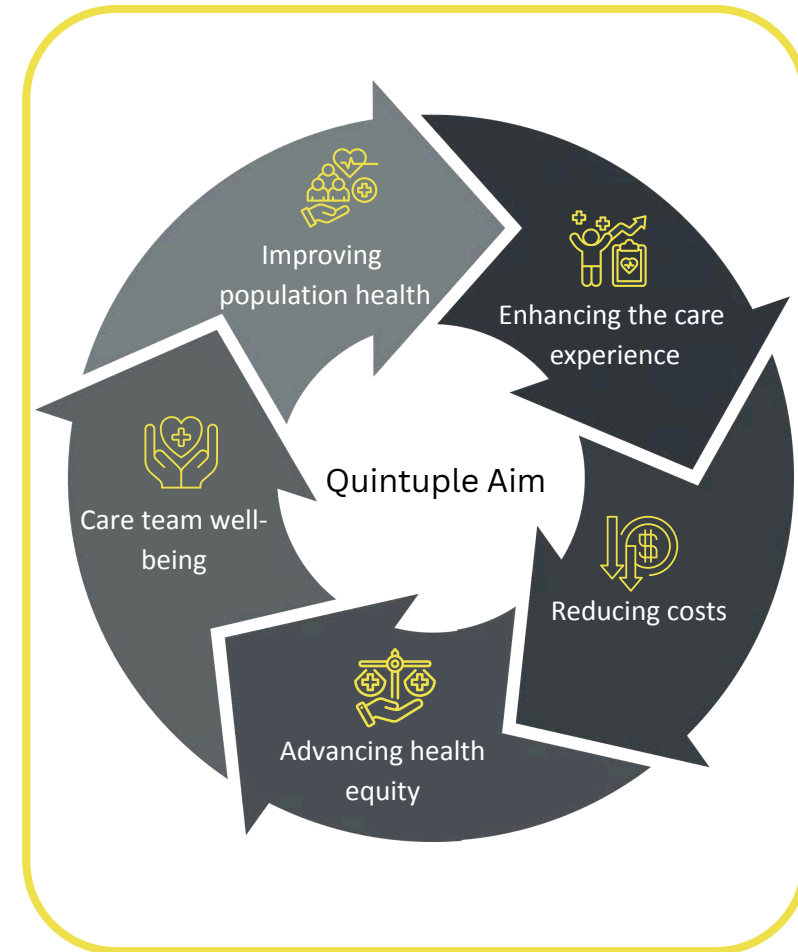
Our commissioning process is the mechanism through which we will deliver our strategic goals and drive measurable improvements in health outcomes by guiding how we plan, fund and improve health services. It focuses on achieving better health outcomes for our community, supporting a stable and capable workforce, and ensuring that consumers have a positive experience of care. The framework also strengthens access to services and ensures that resources are used wisely to deliver the best value for money.

3 CHN Commissioning Guiding Principles

Our commissioning principles have been developed in alignment with the Quintuple aim to guide how we use commissioning to improve health outcomes, enhance peoples care experiences, support a strong health workforce, ensure value for the community and enable equity across the ACT health system.

The following principles inform how we approach commissioning.

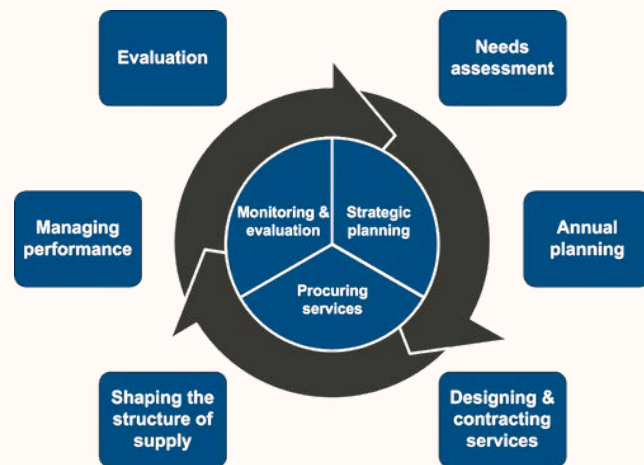
- Align CHN’s Commissioning Framework with best practice commissioning principles and embed continuous quality improvement.
- Engage with First Nations community members and organisations to ensure services are culturally safe and appropriate.
- Understand the needs of the local community to design services to improve health outcomes particularly for those most at risk of poorer health and reflect the unique needs of the community.
- Provide transparency about decisions, resource allocation and what outcomes the community can expect.
- Engage with the community to design and deliver services that are equitable, accessible and valued by the community, focusing on outcomes that matter to the community.
- Improve people’s experience of care.
- Support and engage with primary care workforce to build a satisfied and sustainable workforce.
- Deliver value for money, ensuring resources are used wisely to benefit the whole community.
- Support sustainable health care solutions for the ACT community by building capacity and driving innovation.
- Strengthen integration across the health system by bringing together different data sources (including through stakeholder consultation) to provide a richer view of present and future health needs.
- Use data, research, performance monitoring and evaluation to plan and improve primary health services.
- Codesign and cocreate commissioning activities to deliver services that offer equitable access to the community, whenever possible.
- By aligning our approach with the quintuple aim, we enable a health system that is equitable, sustainable and responsive.



4 CHN Commissioning Cycle

Commissioning is a continual and iterative cycle based on assessing needs, co-design, planning, procurement, monitoring and evaluation. It recognises that all the parts of the commissioning cycle connect and are interactive and is not simply the procurement of services.

CHN has adopted the [National PHN Commissioning Model](#) to include our focus on health system development:



The first phase of the cycle, strategic planning, is conducted through a health Needs Assessment of the community.

The second phase, procuring services and system development, plays an important role in supporting the commission cycle by responding to and addressing areas of local need identified through the Needs Assessment.

The final phase, monitoring and evaluation, encompasses performance management and evaluation to inform continuous improvement and learning.

5 Strategic Planning

The first stage of the commissioning cycle is strategic planning, which is an ongoing function for CHN.

Our commissioning activities and decisions are informed by our comprehensive analysis of the ACT's health system and health workforce needs through a detailed Needs Assessment.

We publish our [comprehensive and annual Needs Assessment](#) together with targeted Needs Assessments on the CHN website. The Needs Assessments are informed through a review of quantitative and qualitative data.

Insights from the Needs Assessment inform planning and codesign of primary health services with consumers, clinicians, local government and community partners in the ACT.

Additionally, CHN works to strengthen national programs by tailoring them to meet local needs through design activities such as:

- eligibility criteria, targeted to support specified priority populations
- locating services in an area of greatest need
- co-location with new or existing services
- tailoring specific areas of the service to ensure it is able to meet what community needs.

Our priority areas are reflected in our activities and projects with a greater level of detail on what those priorities mean for our region and the focus we are taking. CHN also recognises the need for fluidity across its priorities and focus areas.

The health and service outcome and how CHN would like to achieve them for the ACT community are defined in our [Activity workplans](#).

The second phase of the commissioning cycle is procuring services. Procurement is an activity undertaken by CHN as part of the broader aim of improving health outcomes for the ACT region.

Procurement plays an important role in supporting the commissioning cycle by responding to and addressing areas of local need identified through the Needs Assessment. It consists of a number of activities that in turn aim to strengthen the health system and further enable system development.

Through the procurement process, CHN seeks to:

- identify and contract providers to work collaboratively to address local health care needs and improve health system integration
- encourage evidence-based, flexible and innovative solutions within service delivery
- gain insight into the capability and capacity of current and potential providers and identify where the market requires support or development to deliver the required services
- work in partnership with the market and key stakeholders to co-design services
- provide a range of opportunities for service providers and CHN to work together towards meeting the needs of the ACT region
- optimise resources and demonstrate value for money through both competitive and non-competitive procurement processes
- facilitate shared responsibility for the delivery of outcomes between CHN and providers.

CHN is committed to ensuring probity, accountability and transparency in its procurement activities.

- Probity means CHN follows its Procurement Framework and policies and communicates clearly with stakeholders to ensure fair processes.
- Accountability means CHN takes responsibility for its procurement decisions and outcomes.
- Transparency means CHN openly and clearly shares information about procurement processes, decisions and outcomes to ensure funding use is visible and fair.

Managing conflicts of interest is essential to maintaining integrity and accountability in procurement. To avoid actual, potential or perceived conflicts, all Committee, Consortium and Assessment Panel members must understand and follow the CHN Conflict of Interest Guidelines and Policy, complete a Conflict of Interest declaration, and promptly disclose any potential conflicts.

Our procurement requires that selected service providers maintain appropriate professional standards, registrations, accreditation, certifications and insurance.

Selected service providers must have a Clinical Governance Framework relevant to services being provided and undertake regular audits and maintain a complaints management process. Select providers are also required to comply with to the CHN [Cultural Responsiveness Framework 2016–2026 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health](#).

7 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is the third component of the commissioning framework. It helps us continually improve the quality of services, understand what is working well in our region, and respond to emerging issues or changing community needs.

CHN monitors commissioned services by managing the performance of contracted providers in a way that promotes service sustainability, the achievement of desired outcomes and continuous quality improvement.

Service providers can expect our commissioned services to have clear goals for service system improvement and health outcomes with targeted metrics (outcome and output) and progress reporting as standard contractual obligations.

Working in partnership with service providers is a key priority, ensuring that care stays effective, safe and responsive for our community. We strive to develop professional and collaborative relationships with our service providers and partners to enable the effective delivery of services and the achievement of health outcomes. Through a system of formal, informal communication and reporting, our partners and service providers are assisted in meeting their contractual obligations in order to deliver positive health outcomes and health system improvements for our community.

At the service delivery level, our providers are also engaged in the process of evaluation and quality improvement through the continual gathering of consumer self-reported experience and outcomes.

The type of performance review or evaluation will depend on the size and nature of the service and the funding and contractual arrangements, which may include:

- independent evaluation, often conducted by an academic institution or consultant, with specific, tied funding
- central evaluations of nationally delivered services conducted by the funding body.

CHN implements both ongoing and end of service evaluations to ensure commissioned services deliver intended outcomes. This process draws on consumer and stakeholder feedback, consumer outcomes, value for money and system integration. Evaluation outcomes and recommendations feed back into the commissioning cycle and provide the basis of future project and program development and expansion.

8 Commitment to community engagement

Building and maintaining strong stakeholder relationships that foster trust are essential to tailor CHN's commissioned programs and services to the needs, circumstances and preferences of diverse groups across the ACT.

CHN is committed to engaging with stakeholders in designing and commissioning health services in the ACT and use consultations, collaborations and co-design to:

- build engagement into our commissioning processes
- reflect the diversity of our communities in consultation and co-design activities
- build on existing relationships and partnerships
- share information clearly and keep stakeholders informed, including providing feedback and updates after consultations
- involve consumer and carer representatives in decision-making.

This commitment is guided by our Stakeholder Engagement Framework, which sets out how we involve people in shaping and improving services.

9 Governance

CHN's commissioning activity is governed and led by a skills-based [Board](#). The Board is supported by the Audit, Finance & Risk Committee together with the CHN CEO and associated Executive team.

CHN's Board also uses 3 formal advisory committees which incorporate a range of expertise from the ACT.

These are:

- Clinical Council.
- Community Advisory Council.
- General Practice Advisory Council.

The [Clinical Council](#) provides a forum for a multidisciplinary group of clinicians to share their collective knowledge and expertise. It also provides advice on strategic clinical and wider health system issues and local strategies to improve the operation of the ACT primary health care system for consumers, facilitating effective primary health care provision to improve health outcomes.

The [Community Advisory Council](#) provides advice and recommendations to the Board to ensure that strategies and initiatives are consumer focused, cost effective, locally relevant and aligned to improving local health care experiences and expectations.

The [General Practice Advisory Council](#) provides advice and recommendations to the Board on its communications with GPs, strategies to strengthen and promote GP engagement and participation, and on priority areas and issues requiring GP participation.

In addition to formal advisory committees, CHN uses informal feedback mechanisms through our staffing team.

Our commitment to organisational excellence is reflected in our ongoing implementation and integration of ISO 9001 and ISO 27001 certification standards. These internationally recognised frameworks support our dedication to quality management and information security across all levels of the organisation. ISO 9001 has enabled CHN to strengthen our internal processes, enhance service delivery and embed a culture of continuous quality improvement. In parallel, ISO 27001 has reinforced our approach to data governance, risk management and the protection of sensitive information.

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