



Health priority: Prevention initiatives

What do we mean?

Prevention is usually described in three levels:

- primary: promoting health and preventing illness
- secondary: detecting and treating the early signs of disease
- tertiary: reducing the impact, complications or suffering caused by illness and chronic conditions

Our approach to prevention focuses on primary and secondary levels, with tertiary prevention addressed in our approach to managing chronic conditions. Our prevention initiatives are organised and systematic responses that take into account the social determinants of health.

Why is this a priority?

PHNs were initially established with four national headline performance indicators, two of which – cancer screening and immunisation rates – clearly relate to prevention. As well, the high burden of chronic conditions, many of which have lifestyle-related risk factors, indicates that a broad prevention approach can make a real difference to the long term health outcomes for local residents.

What has the data told us?

Key points from our analysis of population health needs across south eastern New South Wales include:

Health status needs

- higher than state and national average figures for health risk factors in adults including smoking, risky alcohol use, obesity, psychological distress and low fruit consumption
- higher premature mortality compared to national estimates.

Health service utilisation

- variability in childhood immunisation rates across the region, with consistently lower rates in the Bega Valley and Eurobodalla, and lower rates for children aged 24-27 months (including Aboriginal children)
- suboptimal participation in the national bowel and cervical screening programs and declining participation in the breast screening program
- limited cancer screening and management services available in rural locations

What have our stakeholders told us?

Feedback from service providers tells us:

- lack of physical activity and poor diet is regarded as a major contributor to poor health locally
- socio-economic disadvantage, social isolation, cultural and linguistic factors create barriers to take up of prevention initiatives for some consumers

Health priority: Prevention initiatives

Consumers have identified:

- a lack of culturally appropriate support structures for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and Aboriginal people to access screening services
- inflexibility in clinic scheduling can lead to missed appointments and miscommunication about timing of mobile clinics can lead to reduced opportunities for screening
- difficulty in accessing healthy lifestyle programs and initiatives

What is our approach?

Our goals for prevention initiatives are:

- Development of a sustainable, systematic approach to prevention in primary care

Specifically, we aim to achieve:

- 95% of children fully immunised in each of the measured categories
- 5% increase in participation rates in each of the measured screening categories (2015-16 baseline)

To achieve this, we will work across our four levels of person centred interventions as outlined in our Business model:

