

Health reform in NSW

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23 August 2010

About NSW CAAH

The NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health (NSW CAAH) works in partnership with NSW Health and other sectoral stakeholders to improve the health and wellbeing of young people aged 12 - 24 in NSW. The key focus areas of NSW CAAH include developing information and resources; capacity building to increase workers' skills and confidence in adolescent health; supporting applied research; advocacy & policy development to increase leadership and action for adolescent health.

Key points

- Young people aged 12-24 make up almost 20% of the population in NSW, yet they are absent from the *Health Reform in NSW* discussion paper.
- The *NSW Youth Health Policy 2010-2015: healthy bodies, healthy minds, vibrant futures* will soon be released by NSW Health.
- There needs to be a clear proposal developed for youth health services in NSW.

Recommendations

NSW CAAH recommends that:

1. Services for young people are included in Medicare Locals. The reason for this is that youth health services are closely aligned with the philosophy of Medicare Locals: 'providing coordinated care, improving access to services, and driving integration across primary health care and hospital services' and, consistent with the need for Medicare Locals to address local health needs, they should include youth specific services;
2. Local Health Network boards should have youth representatives to enable health services to be more youth friendly;
3. The NSW health reforms should be consistent with the forthcoming *NSW Youth Health Policy 2010-2015: healthy bodies, healthy minds, vibrant futures*;
4. The Director General, Health consults the youth health sector. NSW CAAH would be delighted to host this consultation at The Children's Hospital at Westmead should the DG accept this invitation;
5. The inequity of resource distribution, particularly for rural areas should be addressed. Appendix 1 describes the types of services for young people in NSW. Appendix 2 includes a map of health services for young people in NSW according to the new Local Health Network areas. Many geographic areas lack youth specific services;
6. There needs to be a clearer mandate for health promotion and prevention, in line with the the Federal Government's Preventative Health Taskforce seven strategic directions:
 - Sharing responsibility and developing strategic partnerships at all levels
 - Acting early and throughout life
 - Engaging communities and enabling people to make healthy choices
 - Influencing markets and developing coherent policies
 - Reducing inequity
 - Contributing to 'Closing the Gap'
 - Refocusing primary health care towards prevention.

Appendix 1: Health services and programs for young people in NSW

Youth Health Services

Youth health services are specialist services providing multi-disciplinary, primary health care to young people. Focusing on engaging disadvantaged young people, they deliver flexible and unique services to young people in relaxed and comfortable youth-friendly environments. Youth health services work in partnership with other government and non-government services.

Youth health services provide a range of entry-points and non-threatening services (such as creative arts, basic services such as showers and laundries, a drop-in service, sports and recreational facilities), which encourage young people to connect with the service on their own terms. They also provide informal links to other support services and sectors including education, housing, Centrelink and legal services, offering support to young people who are dealing with complex issues.

Youth health services understand the need to respond immediately to young people's requests for support and assistance and they share a common operating philosophy, which values social justice, equity, and a holistic view of young people's health and wellbeing.

Services for young people with mental health problems

Children and young people with mental health issues or who are vulnerable to developing mental health problems need a comprehensive range of approaches and services. For those aged 17 and under, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services provide specialist community-based services for young people, their parents, carers, and families; more intensive treatment through day programs and hospitals; outreach telepsychiatry; and special programs such as support for young people who have a parent with a mental illness.

Youth Mental Health Services for 14-24 year olds are located in youth-friendly settings where mental health services are integrated and sometimes co-located with primary health, drug & alcohol and other services for young people. These services focus on early intervention with flexible approaches to service provision. Local models have been developed by local NSW Health services, with input from young people, to meet their specific needs, local demographics and mix of service agencies.

The NSW School-Link Initiative: towards better mental health, is jointly coordinated by the NSW Departments of Education and Training and Health. School-Link aims to improve the understanding, recognition, management, support and prevention of mental health problems in young people. It supports partnerships and collaboration between mental health services and schools and TAFE colleges to promote mental health, prevent mental health problems and facilitate early identification, management and support of students with mental health problems.

The NSW Early Psychosis Program is a youth focused service that aims to reduce symptoms and distress levels for young people and their families, reduce suicide risk, assist a rapid and complete recovery, and to improve long-term outcomes for young people.

headspace

Launched in July 2006, headspace is a federally-funded program that allows young people to seek help early through new models of care provided in youth friendly, integrated, multidisciplinary service centres. These centres provide a public-private model of care involving General Practitioners, psychologists, social workers, youth workers and other professionals providing primary health, mental health, drug & alcohol and vocational assistance. The aim is to not only assist young people to address their mental health and substance use issues, but also to address other important factors such as homelessness, drug and alcohol use, education, training and employment.

Hospital-based care for young people

Hospital based specialist care is provided through the Departments of Adolescent Medicine at The Children's Hospital at Westmead and Westmead Hospital, the Youth Consultancy at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (SSWAHS), Sydney Children's Hospital Acute Care Facility and Kaleidoscope at John Hunter Hospital. These units provide expert multidisciplinary assessment and care to young people, their parents, carers and families. Other hospitals also provide some specialised services for young people, such as antenatal clinics and group programs.

Statewide and specialist services

NSW Health provides a series of statewide specialist services that deal with specific health issues faced by young people. They can be accessed by young people from across NSW and include drug & alcohol and mental health services (including the Transcultural Mental Health Centre and Children of Parents with a Mental Illness), The NSW Adolescent Vaccination Program, eating disorder services, adolescent weight management, complex chronic illness clinics, and services for young people who are victims of sexual assault and those have been perpetrators of sexual abuse.

Agency for Clinical Innovation Transition Network

As children mature into adolescents and young adults, they outgrow the expertise of children's services (Paediatrics & Child Health) and need to find adult health services to support them. The Transition Network aims to improve continuity of care for young people with chronic illnesses or disabilities.

Statewide health promotion programs

Statewide health promotion programs include programs to prevent young people from taking up smoking; encourage healthy eating and regular physical activity and prevent overweight and obesity; provide safe playgrounds to prevent injury; and provide free, confidential telephone-based services with health information and coaching to facilitate lifestyle changes.

Youth Health Coordinators

Youth Health Coordinators are located within local NSW Health Services and work towards improving young people's access to health services. They provide a point of coordination for youth health activities and services in the local NSW Health Services, and undertake planning, networking, mapping and professional development activities. Youth Health Coordinators build networks and foster a collaborative approach between stakeholders, agencies and young people. They work across government and community sectors with organisations that deal with a range of issues affecting young people. They have an important role to play in promoting young people's health rights, needs, involvement and participation. Equally important is their role in responding to the professional development needs of mainstream health professionals in the local NSW Health Service, encouraging and supporting the development of skills in adolescent health.

Youth Consultants

Some local NSW Health Services have focused on improving the youth friendliness of mainstream services by auditing services including health services and general practitioners, often using youth consultants paid to rate services for their youth friendliness and provide feedback about how the service improved their ability to reach, attract, engage and retain young people in need or at risk.

Sexual Health Services

Sexual Health Services across NSW provide young people with free and confidential screening for sexually transmitted infections, treatment, support, counselling and referral to specialist adolescent services. Some Sexual Health Services have youth specific outreach clinics operating in partnership with other specialist youth services to provide holistic sexual health care to at-risk young people.

Community Health Centres

Young people can also access services through community health centres, which provide primary health care services to the entire community. While the services are not specifically aimed at young people, they include services that young people might access such as counselling, health promotion and allied health care.

General Practice

Each year, approximately two thirds of young people in New South Wales see a General Practitioner (Centre for Epidemiology and Research, 2008). General Practitioners provide diagnosis, treatment, support and referral for adolescent health problems. For young people who want to talk about their health or get help with a problem, General Practitioners are often the first point of contact with the health system. General Practitioners usually operate in private practice, although some General Practitioners work in youth services and other facilities that support young people.

Health clinics in community-based youth services

Many youth services also have medical clinics. The clinics aim to improve young people's access to General Practitioners, with an emphasis on reaching disadvantaged young people who are more likely to access community-based youth services. General Practitioners bulk bill their sessions or are paid by their Division of General Practice which means the services are provided at no cost to the young person. Some innovative systems have been developed which provide vouchers for medication, free pathology and free services from other specialist groups. Other clinics that may operate in youth services include sexual health clinics or counselling services developed in partnership between health services and the youth service.

Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)

Many NGOs provide a range of local, accessible services for young people. These services may include assistance with housing and accommodation – both crisis and long-term; education, training and skill development; and counselling, emotional, financial and practical support.

School nurses

In NSW, school nurses are currently employed predominantly by non-government schools to provide clinical services and health promotion. They also provide an important referral point to other medical and specialist health services (Moses et al, 2008). Where individual students have health conditions that impact on the school, health services support schools to manage these specific situations.

Aboriginal Medical Services

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services, also known as Aboriginal Medical Services, provide culturally appropriate primary health care and health services to young people within the communities they serve in keeping with the Aboriginal holistic definition of health.

More information about programs

A map of youth health services can be found on the NSW CAAH website:
www.caah.chw.edu.au/links

Publications about adolescent programs can be also found listed on the NSW Health website:
www.health.nsw.gov.au

Appendix 2: Youth Specific Health Services in NSW by Local Health Networks

Service system >	Youth Health Services	Youth Mental Health Services	headspace	Specialist state-wide health services	NGO Youth Health Services
Managed by >	PC & CP, NSW Health	MH and D&A, NSW Health	Federal Govt	NSW Health	NGOs
Sydney	Youthblock Health & Resource Service	Waterloo; Camperdown; Marrickville headspace*	Headspace Camperdown; Headspace Marrickville; Headspace Waterloo	Youth Consultancy & The Chill, Royal Prince Alfred	Murralappi – The Settlement
South West Sydney	Canterbury Multicultural YHS; FLYHT, Fairfield; The Corner YHS, Bankstown; TraXside, Campbelltown	Headspace Campbelltown*	Headspace Campbelltown; Tahmoor	Gna Ka Lun Adolescent Mental Health Unit Youth Drug Court, Liverpool	
South Eastern Sydney		Bondi; Kogarah; Sutherland			St George Youth Services Upzone; The Junction - WAYS Youth Service; Satellite Sexual Health Youth Clinic, Bondi
Illawarra	Crossroads YHS, Nowra	Wollongong	Headspace Wollongong; Headspace Shoalhaven.		Community Health for Adolescents in Need (CHAIN) YHS Wollongong
Western Sydney	Western Area Adolescent Team, Mt Druitt; High Street YHS, Harris Park	Parramatta; Blacktown; Cumberland; Mt Druitt Headspace*	Headspace Mount Druitt; Headspace Parramatta	Department of Adolescent Medicine, Westmead Hospital; Redbank House; Rivendell Child & Adolescent Unit; New Street Adolescent Service	Follow-On Youth Recovery Support Team (FYRST), Parramatta
Nepean/ Blue Mountains		Penrith		Nepean Youth Drug & Alcohol Service, Penrith	The Warehouse Youth Health Centre, Penrith Nepean Adolescent & Family Service, Penrith; The Junction Youth Health Medical Service, Penrith (Nepean DGP)

* collocated with headspace

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Managed by >	PC & CP, NSW Health	MH and D&A, NSW Health	Federal government	NSW Health	NGOs
Northern Sydney				Coral Tree Family Service	Ku-ring-gai Youth Development Service; Northern Sydney Youth Support Service
Central Coast	Central Coast YHS, Wyong	Y Central, Gosford*	Headspace Central Coast, Gosford		
Hunter /New England	Kaleidoscope, Newcastle	Foster; Maitland; Tamworth	Headspace Hunter, Maitland		
Murrumbidgee		Wagga Wagga	Headspace Riverina, Wagga Wagga		
Southern NSW		Albury; Bega; Yass/Queanbeyan.			
Central West		Orange; Parkes; Bathurst; Dubbo	Central West Headspace, Bathurst & Cowra		Adolescent & Family Counselling service, Dubbo. Family Planning & Sexual Health Services: Youth Drop-In Clinic
Far West		Bourke; Broken Hill; Lightning Ridge.			
Mid North Coast	Coffs Harbour Outreach YHS	Coffs Harbour; Port Macquarie; Tweed Heads.	Headspace Coffs Harbour		
Northern NSW	Murwillumbah Youth Health Liaison	Lismore; Byron Bay			
Specialist Networks				Sydney Children's Hospitals Network Randwick & Westmead	
Justice Health				Justice Health Adolescent Health	

* collocated with headspace