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Media Release

Western Sydney communities to benefit from a more streamlined primary health care system

After-hours, mental health and aged care services have all been red flagged as the priority areas for WentWest, the newly launched Western Sydney Medicare Local. In the first of many community and stakeholder forums, WentWest this week sought advice from a broad spectrum of health professionals and community groups to better understand the existing barriers to accessing much needed services in the region.

“As the new Western Sydney Medicare Local, WentWest is working with and through the local community to better identify the primary health care needs of Western Sydney and to solve these issues at a local level”, says CEO, Olivia Wood. “Our first step has been to establish a network of health professionals and community groups working within the region, to collect their main concerns. The evolution of this network however is not a recent development; it builds on the relationships and collaborative work that has been growing in Western Sydney for over five years. WentWest will work with these organisations into the future as we seek to solve existing service gaps.”

WentWest’s role will be to lead a more coordinated and localised approach to primary health service planning for Western Sydney, but emphasises the patient-GP relationship is central to its success. “On the surface, the relationship between a patient and their GP will remain unchanged. What will differ is a GPs ability to tap into local services to better aid patient care,” explains Wood.

The management of type 2 diabetes is one such example of how the changes will better assist patients under the Western Sydney Medicare Local. WentWest will work in collaboration with health professionals and community groups to improve access to diabetes education, dietary consultation, podiatry and exercise services for those living with the condition. “In some instances it may be a workforce issue and we will need to work with the community to fill that gap and draw more professionals to the region. In other instances it may be matter of increasing awareness of existing programs and services available to support patients,” explains Wood.

It is anticipated the transition to a more localised and collaborative approach to primary health care will help Western Sydney patients and the professionals who service them to experience a more streamlined system in the future. “We are endeavouring to create a more connected primary health care system for Western Sydney patients and its health professionals”, maintains Wood.





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Over August, WentWest will hold a series of locally-based consultative forums to commence planning across the region and to further work with the community in establishing the revised model. The forums, to be known as Local Primary Health Care Networks, will be responsible for identifying critical issues in the region and to make recommendations to WentWest for planning of services.

For more information on the Western Sydney Medicare Local please contact Marketing and Communications, Rachel Barker on 0425 260 376.

