

KEY MESSAGES

Supporting Primary Health Care Providers in western Sydney areas of socio-economic disadvantage

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Policy context

We investigated needs of primary health care providers (PHCPs) in socio-economically and health disadvantaged areas by review of the literature and interviews with 57 PHCPs and patients in western Sydney. We recommend strategies for sustainable, quality health care in this environment.

Key messages

Recommendations address the quadruple aim (improve patient experience and population health, reduce costs and improve HCP satisfaction) at health system, practice and community levels.

Strategies recommended at health systems level,

- > Define what we want from health services and measure outcomes to provide evidence
- > Ensure those at socio-economic disadvantage receive timely, quality health services
- > Establish Patient Centred Medical Home approaches in primary health care
- > Enroll general practice patients to enhance continuity of care
- > MBS support for primary health care providers to work at the top of their licenses
- > Integrate health services between primary and secondary/tertiary health care
- > Remuneration in primary health care to reward quality care and work in areas of disadvantage, and
- > Support Primary Health Care Organisations to advance these initiatives.

Strategies recommended at General Practice Level include,

- > Multidisciplinary team-based practices delivering patient-centred, personal health care
- > Support PHCPs to value their role in health care provision and their communities
- > Local networks and other professional and personal support for PHCPs
- > Use of interpreters, employment of bilingual staff and training staff in cultural competence where health care is provided in Indigenous, refugee and multi-cultural communities, and
- > Encourage students and trainees to consider working in areas of disadvantage.

Strategies recommended in the community include,

- > Community-led health literacy programs including information on health issues, healthy lifestyles, and roles and expectations of GPs, other HCPs and local services.

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