

FACT SHEET
27 August 2021

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED – SERVICES

Each fortnight, Care For Our Region will address key questions raised by local communities. This fortnight, CEOs from each health service answer key questions on why a new health service could enhance services for their community.

Should the proposal be approved, the health services will undertake joint planning, looking at all services currently delivered and understand how best to fill gaps and what are the best opportunities for enhanced services.

The opportunities for some of these gaps and services are outlined below.

Edenhope

1. Increased clinically appropriate care at the Edenhope campus, through transfers from Horsham to Edenhope & District Memorial Hospital. This can mean helping patients to recover from surgery, respiratory illness, falls, physiotherapy and other treatment closer to home
2. Initiate an Urgent Care Centre Telehealth support system to enable direct contact to Ballarat Health Services Emergency Department for nurse led assessment and care
3. Increased specialist appointments through Telehealth and in Horsham to minimise Edenhope patients travelling to Ballarat for treatment (See Horsham points below on how this could be achieved)

Stawell

1. Increased opportunities for patients to return to Stawell Regional Health for recovery and restorative care in hospital or in community care
2. Opportunity to expand oncology services delivered in Stawell either through the Day Oncology unit or at home with increased support from Ballarat and Wimmera Health Services
3. Maintain the Urgent Care Capacity as a 24/7 service with the support of Ballarat Health Services and Wimmera Health Care Group medical support and reduce the number of patients transferred to Ballarat for emergency care

Wimmera

1. Increased access to clinical services across a broad range of areas which could include orthopaedics, plastics, paediatrics, obstetrics, and general surgery. These could be realised through joint employment between Ballarat and Horsham to fill specialist roles and improved opportunities for skills development. This will also help improve capability of local staff to sustain and grow, with obstetrics and maternity and general medicine being a focus area
2. Improved continuity and quality of care for patients by improving pharmacy and administration through increased sharing of business systems that enable access to patient information across the region, including through a potential electronic medical records system
3. A shared IT network and cohesive system with Ballarat Health Services could make out-of-hours palliative care a reality in the Wimmera. A cohesive system can also improve accessibility for patients and cut down on administration, increasing efficiency

Ballarat

1. Increased opportunities for staff to expand and grow their careers by gaining experience across services. This could include clinical rotations through different sites or specialty areas, joint training and development, and practice support to enable a greater scope of practice locally
2. Enhanced recruitment to specialised roles. A larger health service would have greater capacity to attract and sustain clinicians in specialised areas. This can help alleviate some of the growing demand experienced at Ballarat, by sharing skills and resources across the region
3. Greater engagement and strengthening of clinical pathways can enable Ballarat Health Services to support patients to receive care they need in their communities
4. A cohesive IT system improves efficiency for patients to ensure information is easily accessible between health services

How will you attract specialised doctors and medical workforce to the region?

- Together, the four health services will be one large employer, able to attract and sustain a larger workforce pool, especially for specialist roles. It should also reduce reliance on temporary staff and locums in regional and rural communities, leading to greater workforce stability and improved continuity of care
- By coming together, Horsham, Edenhope and Stawell can build capacity and opportunities for the workforce to develop and maintain specialist or advanced knowledge and skills. By joining together across the four organisations, we would anticipate greater opportunities for both staff and the users of our services
- Creating a new health service is not a 'magic bullet', but it can provide many opportunities to attract and retain staff to the region. Staff working at our local health services can get the benefits of working in different health settings, while also receiving the training, development, research and career opportunities that a larger service can offer. There would be:
 - Better support for staff – in terms of supervision, peer support, leave and back-fill arrangements and access to shared resources and broad experience levels– to attract and sustain specialists locally
 - Opportunities for workforce training paths - a larger pool of specialist clinicians and a breadth of experience to draw on – including generalist clinicians developing specialist capabilities
 - Shared comprehensive training and development programs within the region, to build sustainable medical and clinical workforce for the future.
 - Potential to convert locum staff into permanent local jobs – particularly in specialist medical services – a proportion of \$9.6m in locum costs would come back to Horsham and the community

The Boards of Edenhope and District Memorial Hospital, Stawell Regional Health, Wimmera Health Care Group and Ballarat Health Services believe they will be healthier, stronger, together.

For more information or to have your say visit carefourregion.com.au