



ACT Government

Great gains for Health in ACT Budget

Embargoed until 1 May 2001

Health and community care services have received a huge boost in the 2001-02 ACT Budget, Minister for Health, Housing and Community Services, Michael Moore said today.

Public funding for Health, Housing and Community Care will rise from \$392.6m to \$420.8m – an increase of 7.2%.

"We are lucky to have a very healthy population but we cannot take this status for granted, particularly as we are ageing rapidly," he said.

"The ACT Government is keen to invest in maintaining and improving our health and wellbeing.

"Through this Budget we are investing in improved health services, both Government and non-Government, and in filling service gaps.

"Health initiatives address the Budget themes – addressing poverty, early intervention, capacity building and innovation – and are carefully targeted to meet the needs of families, older people, youth and the disadvantaged in society.

"While all the initiatives are important, I am particularly pleased to be able to put substantially more resources into reducing dental waiting times and providing better post-hospitalisation services for older people.

"Once again, we are doing a great deal to minimise the harms caused by illicit drugs and we are also focussing on improving the quality care in disability services.

"Health promotion has also gained from a huge boost in resources, as it is time for a renewed approach to preventing disease and improving overall wellbeing.

"This Budget will further strengthen our partnerships with the community and community based organisations, as we pool our individual strengths and work together to achieve health for all," Mr Moore said.

Health and community care initiatives are summarised below, and on the following pages.

Addressing poverty

Dental Service waiting list reduction

\$1 million in 2001-02 (\$2.576 million over four years) to reduce waiting times for dental restorative treatment or for dentures for clients accessing the public dental health program.

Home-based outreach for young people with special needs

\$120,000 in 2001-02 (\$498,000 over four years) will provide outreach services to ensure sustainable accommodation arrangements for our youth. The program will particularly support young people with special needs (people aged 12-25 years with a mental illness, substance abuse problem, disabilities, and behavioural problems) to assist their independence and wellbeing in the community.

Home and Community Care Program Matching Funds

\$150,000 in 2001-02 (\$600,000 over four years) to contribute to the matching requirements of the Commonwealth's Home and Community Care Program. The program will provide increased maintenance and

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support services essential to the wellbeing of the frail aged, younger people with disabilities and their carers to assist their independence in the community.

Integrated community based psycho/social rehabilitation

\$155,000 in 2001-02 (\$642,000 over four years) for integrated community based psycho/social rehabilitation and early intervention services. The program will provide a community based partnership between the ACT Mental Health Service and the Belconnen Community Services Inc to support people who suffer from or who are at risk of suffering from mental illness and is aimed at enhancing their participation in community activities to improve mental health.

Transport concessions

\$100,000 in 2001-02 (\$400,000 over four years) to enhance the Taxi Subsidy Scheme, particularly targeting people who are wheelchair dependent to ensure they are not placed at risk of poverty through lack of transport.

Early Intervention

Additional counselling services for women

\$200,000 in 2001-02 (\$1.310 million over four years) for non-crisis counselling services for women, consistent with the priorities outlined in the ACT Women's Action Plan 2000/2001. Services offered will include therapeutic groups, education and short term counselling and will be targeted to women with anxiety/depression and will increase services for women affected by violence.

Additional Public Methadone Clinic funding

\$261,000 in 2001-02 (\$1.082 million over four years) for the enhancement of the Public Methadone Program to support opioid dependent people and enable them to access methadone and other pharmaceutical drug treatments within reasonable timeframes. This will include establishment of a satellite clinic on the north side of Canberra to cater for additional places in the community methadone stream supported by the public clinic.

Alcohol and Drug Family skills based program for parents

\$82,000 in 2001-02 (\$336,000 over four years) for alcohol and drug family skills based programs to support families and friends affected by alcohol and other drug use. The program will provide for implementation of the NSW Family Drug Support Stepping-Stones skills based program in the ACT.

Cervical Cytology Register (CCR) Upgrade

\$100,000 in 2001-02 (\$253,000 over four years) for an upgrade of the cervical cytology register. The funding is required to provide for the continued functioning of the system to ensure ongoing support for women participating in the scheme.

Disability Service Improvement Scheme

\$250,000 in 2001-02 (\$1.036 million over four years) for the Disability Service Improvement Scheme to provide independent advice on client satisfaction and the quality of services provided to disability clients.

Drug and Alcohol Initiatives

\$2.179 million over three years to provide a package of community based alcohol and other drugs services encompassing treatment, education and prevention. The program will support opiate dependent people, and people with other dependency problems including targeted services for women and teenagers.

(Note: the initiative confirms ongoing support for initiatives launched in the 2000-01 Budget after funds were reallocated following the deferral of the safe injecting place trial.)

Enhanced Indigenous Health Services

\$250,000 in 2001-02 (\$1.036 million over four years) to enhance indigenous health services including outreach and case management workers. The program will provide linkages with existing services for indigenous people

in the ACT and also have its own outreach and case management services. The program will support young indigenous people and their families.

Health Promotion Strategy

\$400,000 in 2001-02 (\$2.690 million over four years) for a comprehensive Health Promotion Strategic Framework encompassing health promotion and disease prevention approaches. The program will support delivery of better health outcomes for the community through integrated and coordinated health promotion activity.

Indigenous Mental Health Workers

\$186,000 in 2001-02 (\$770,000 over four years) for indigenous mental health workers. This will provide improved access to more culturally aware, responsible mental health services in the ACT.

The program will support the Indigenous Regional Health Plan. This initiative seeks to build on our efforts to be more culturally aware and responsive to the mental health (and spiritual wellbeing) needs of the indigenous communities who access ACT Mental Health services.

National Disease Control Effort

\$398,000 in 2001-02 (\$942,000 over four years) to maintain national public health standards through the implementation of the new food safety regulations. The program will provide proactive strategies to enhance food safety in the ACT through the provision of education and support to businesses on this area of change.

The initiative will also support improved air quality monitoring through better air monitoring equipment, analysis and feedback to the public. This is a requirement of the new national standards for air quality monitoring. The program will also support implementation of a range of actions targeting disease control in the areas of environmental health and communicable diseases.

Newborn Hearing Screening Program

\$186,000 in 2001-02 (\$479,000 over four years) for the Newborn Hearing Screening Program to provide early detection of hearing loss in newborns to reduce developmental delay as a result of untreated hearing loss. The Program will support routine hearing screening of all babies in the ACT before the age of 3 months and ensure the availability of intervention by 6 months of age.

Parenting Services in Gungahlin

\$220,000 in 2001-02 (\$832,000 over four years) for parenting services in Gungahlin to provide extra clinical space for Gungahlin as well as enhancing child health services through co-location and partnerships with other services. The program will support young families living in the Gungahlin area.

Short Term Crisis Accommodation

\$240,000 in 2001-02 (\$1.152 million over four years) to provides a safe overnight environment for people at risk of homelessness for a range of reasons or who are intoxicated. The program will enable intoxicated people to sober up safely as an alternative to being placed in police custody and overnight accommodation and a brief intervention to access other health and social services for individuals at risk of homelessness.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Funding

\$100,000 in 2001-02 (\$412,000 over four years) to support families following a still birth, prenatal or sudden and unexpected death of an infant or young child. The program will provide for three key areas: a safe sleeping education program; training for peer support emergency volunteers; and an expansion of the existing bereavement support program.

Youth Smoking and Health Campaign

\$200,000 in 2001-02 (\$830,000 over four years) to reduce the incidence of teenage smoking in the ACT. The program will provide a targeted education and support program to prevent the uptake of smoking and to help young people stop smoking.

Innovation

Community Care Management Information System

\$8.276 million in 2001-02 (\$17.012 million over four years) for the delivery of a Community Health Information System. The program will provide implementation of an agency wide information system for ACT Community Care to allow for efficient delivery of client focussed disability and community health services, collection of data sets, participation in portfolio and whole of government initiatives, and delivery of productivity improvements.

Service capacity

Additional Disability Services

\$2.0 million in 2001-02 (\$8m over four years) to provide a range of services including young people with disabilities leaving school, support for clients with complex needs in residential care and to meet unmet need.

Funds will also be utilised in assisting agencies put in place policy and procedures to ensure services are delivered in accordance with the National Disability Standards which will complement the work of the new Disability Service Improvement Scheme. The additional funds are designed to build capacity in the disability services sector, particularly the non-government sector, to enable agencies in the ACT to enhance existing services.

Additional Post Hospitalisation Services for Older People

\$1.501 million in 2001-02 (\$3.290 million over four years) to develop a range of options to meet the needs of older persons immediately after discharge from hospital.

Alcohol and Drug Foundation ACT (ADFACT)

\$125,000 in 2001-02 (\$518,000 over four years) for an enhanced treatment program to be implemented through the upgrading of staffing levels. The program will provide improved residential program for drug dependent people and their families.

Canberra Schizophrenia Fellowship Inc Vocational Rehabilitation Program

\$212,000 in 2001-02 (\$878,000 over four years) to increase recurrent funding for the vocational rehabilitation program. The program will provide mental health consumers training and work experience to assist them gain skills, confidence and self esteem.

Cancer Services – Model Enhancement and Lymphoedema Clinic

\$100,000 in 2001-02 (\$730,000 over four years) for enhanced cancer services through the provision of an integrated ACT wide public oncology service and a lymphoedema clinic for post-mastectomy patients.

Clinical Pastoral Education Program

\$28,000 in 2001-02 (\$116,000 over four years) to provide training for the volunteer pastoral care workers at TCH, provide non-denominational pastoral and spiritual support services for the TCH and qualify for registration as a training centre with the NSW College for Clinical Pastoral Education.

Clinical School Expansion – Department of Internal Medicine

\$150,000 in 2001-02 (\$1.058 million over four years) will provide support for the steady progressive development of the Canberra Clinical School.

Community Based Hepatitis Services

\$150,000 in 2001-02 (\$622,000 over four years) to increase primary care focussed hepatitis services in the community. The rate of Hepatitis infection in Australia is growing and an integrated model of service delivery involving clinicians in community settings will be expanded.

Corrections Health

\$55,000 in 2001-02 (\$228,000 over four years) for additional medical and pathology services to Belconnen Remand Centre, and joint Corrective Services & Health case management training and health promotion initiatives aimed at improving health outcomes for remandees.

ACT Eden Monaro Cancer Support Group

\$45,000 in 2001-02 (\$186,000 over four years) for marketing of the ACT & Eden Monaro Cancer Support Group. The program will facilitate corporate sponsorship of the group as well as selling advertising in the group's biannual newsletter. This initiative will support people with cancer and their families and friends.

Enhancement of Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services

\$500,000 in 2001-02 (\$2.067 million over four years) to enhance existing drug and alcohol services to provide:

- ◆ infrastructure for the women's and children's supported withdrawal service;
- ◆ additional injecting equipment to support the needle and syringe program;
- ◆ upgrade of the women's half way house to enable more clients (including those on methadone and benzodiazepines) to be adequately cared for in the community;
- ◆ funding to enable public drug and alcohol doctors to be upgraded to specialist level to meet national standard;
- ◆ ongoing funding support for drug and alcohol and mental health services to be trained in dual diagnosis; and
- ◆ coordination of methadone and pharmaceutical drug treatment accreditation.

Extended General Practitioner outreach hours to meet young client needs

\$50,000 in 2001-02 (\$206,000 over four years) to provide for extended General Practitioner hours at the Junction Youth Health Service. This program will support at risk and disadvantaged young people.

Funding for the Strengthening the Nursing Workforce Offer

\$2.276 million in 2001-02 (\$11.727 over four years) to support :

- ◆ Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) variation for nursing staff at the Calvary Public Hospital, and
- ◆ funding for scholarships for re-entry and specialist nursing courses.

The EBA variation provides benefits to staff including:

- ◆ wage rises of 11.7% through to 1 July 2002,
- ◆ pay bonuses for qualified nurses who work in specialty areas of need,
- ◆ increased night duty pay bonuses, and
- ◆ workplace reforms including voluntary flexibility of shift lengths and performance reviews for future level 2 nurses.

Mental Health Eating Disorders

\$350, 000 in 2001-02 (\$1.451 million over four years) for an intensive day treatment program for those affected by eating disorders. The program will provide diagnostic and treatment services through a multidisciplinary team for people who would otherwise receive traditional inpatient care together with assistance to primary health care professionals in the prevention and early identification of eating disorders. Treatments will be adjusted to client improvement.

Older Persons Mental Health Service Stage One

\$292,000 in 2001-02 (\$1.211 million over four years) to expand the Older Persons Mental Health Services. The program will provide assessment and treatment of older persons with mental illnesses and education for service providers, families and carers regarding dementia and mental illness.

Rehabilitation services – Unmet Need

\$200,000 in 2001-02 (\$830,000 over four years) for the enhancement of public rehabilitation services in the ACT which will assist in meeting the increased demand for rehabilitation services as well as minimising the need for ACT residents to access services from interstate.

Renal Services – model enhancement and growth

\$313,000 in 2001-02 (\$1.3 million over four years) to enhance Renal Services in the ACT. The rate of renal disease in the ACT is faster than the general demand for health services. The program will provide a holistic renal service including hypertension management and outreach support for patients able to manage self-care in the home.

Residential Youth Withdrawal Beds

\$500,000 in 2001-02 (\$1.970 million over four years) for a four bed residential withdrawal service in association with the Ted Noffs Foundation youth residential rehabilitation service.

Sexual Health Services

\$508,000 in 2001-02 (\$2.107 million over four years) to fund strategies to address the needs of sexual assault victims and to provide sexual health services. The program will provide funding for the provision of a sexual assault service to the indigenous community, establishment of a part time Cantonese speaking sexual health worker and the establishment of a sexual health outreach worker.

It will also provide an integrated service to sexual assault victims, with choice of gender of medical practitioner and streamlined therapeutic and forensic procedures within the health portfolio.

The Psychiatric Consultation Liaison for GPs project

\$215,000 in 2001-02 (\$893,000 over four years) to increase the availability of consultation liaison for GPs. The program will provide telephone advice and support, formal assessments as requested by the GP along with developing client management plans and better integration between GPs and community mental health teams.

Building Community Capacity

An extra \$600,000 in 2001-02, and \$2.484m over four years, will be made available to enhance the capacity of the non-government sector to meet community needs.

“Social capital is all about government, business and the community working together for the benefit of all.

But we can't expect our community sector to rise to this challenge without some support, and this Budget is all about furthering that support,” Mr Moore said.

Statement ends

Media Contact:

Rachel Hill – 6205 0077, 0407 231 984
rachel.hill@act.gov.au