
CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Partnering with local government to move from fragmentation to integration

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Introduction: South Western Sydney covers a diverse region with pockets of rural communities, unprecedented growth areas, significant socio-economic disadvantage and large populations of culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The region will face significant demographic, health, social and financial challenges over the next few years due to rapid population growth and infrastructure development.

Health Alliances aim to develop effective solutions to coordinate efforts and direct limited resources through place-based partnerships and cross-sector collaboration, to reduce the burden of chronic disease, lead disease prevention initiatives and tackle inequity.

Wollondilly Health Alliance (formed in 2014) and Fairfield City Health Alliance (formed in 2018) are made up of three key partners representing all levels of government; South Western Sydney Local Health District, South Western Sydney Primary Health Network, and Local Council.

Targeted population and stakeholders: In addition to key partners, local representatives from primary care, government agencies and non-government organisations has enabled Health Alliances to leverage knowledge, expertise and resources to develop innovative solutions to improve community health outcomes.

Solutions are tailored to the local area and identified by a health needs assessment based on community demographics, social determinants of health and local health service provision.

The Wollondilly Health Alliance's strategies and programs include: home-based telemonitoring, video consultations, a mobile community information service, an outdoor gym, a community garden, Aboriginal community engagement through arts, and village café.

The Fairfield City Health Alliance's strategies and programs include bilingual diabetes self-management program, mental health literacy training for Arabic community and spiritual leaders, and development of an integrated model for gambling harm screening and referral.

Highlights:

- Telemonitoring program has reduced Emergency Department presentations and hospital admissions, and demonstrate self-reported improved quality of life, increased confidence to manage health and self-care, and reduced reliance on hospital services.
- Dilly Wanderer (mobile bus information service) has increased knowledge of preventive health, improved health literacy, and increased social connectedness.
- Healthy Towns projects demonstrate self-reported improvements in fruit and vegetables consumptions, participation in physical activity, and improved skills.

- External grant awarded to develop an integrated model for gambling harm screening and referral in primary care and community service settings.
- Under the Western Sydney City Deal, eight local councils, two LHDs and two PHNs, committed in principle to develop the 'Western Sydney City Deal Health Alliance'.

Sustainability: Partner investment in Health Alliances include a mix of co-funded and in-kind investment. Shared resourcing arrangements or external funding contributions are in place for the implementation of specific programs.

Discussion: Evaluation of Health Alliance programs are predominantly qualitative via surveys. A quantitative evaluation is being planned, due for completion in December 2019.

The successful implementation of Health Alliances have been enabled by a framework based on:

- shared health priority areas prioritised by partners
- an agreed governance structure and strong leadership
- a formal Memorandum of Understanding between key partners
- secretariat and project management support from project officers
- financial and in-kind support from partners.