



THE HON SUSSAN LEY MP

Minister for Health
Minister for Sport

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 3 July 2015

\$6.4m for nurses to deliver health in areas of greatest need

A \$6.4 million Abbott Government commitment to a nursing in primary health care programme will aim to improve access to health care for rural and remote communities, older Australians and those with chronic disease.

Minister for Health Sussan Ley said the Abbott Government would partner with the Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA) to boost the number of nurses working in frontline health services, in particularly in rural and remote communities.

Ms Ley said it is widely recognised that rural and regional Australia faces additional health challenges and these projects would look to support better access for country people while also focussing on chronic disease management and the coordinated care of the elderly.

“Nurses play a critical role in providing high quality primary health care,” Ms Ley said.

“Having nurses in the right place at the right time, particularly in regional and rural Australia, is a key part of the Abbott Government’s plan to improve the nation’s primary health care system.”

The three-year funding will enable the Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association to deliver a programme of activities to deliver nursing services in general practices and primary health care.

Ms Ley said these activities will include support to recruit and retain nurses, both newly graduated and existing, for primary health care.

“Nurses will be encouraged to move into primary health care through a new national ‘transition to practice’ pilot,” Ms Ley said.

“The Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association as the peak body for nurses working in general practice and primary health care is uniquely positioned to offer the programme of activities.”

APNA President Karen Booth said the programmes would combat rising costs and demands on the health system.

“Australia needs a strong and sustainable primary health care system. Nurses are at the heart of that system and this is why we are thrilled APNA has been chosen to deliver the Nursing in Primary Health Care (NPHC) Program,” Ms Booth said.

“The three year NPHC Program will achieve better, more cost-effective management of chronic disease and ageing, with improved team-based care delivered in general practice and primary health care services. It will have a strong focus on rural and remote communities and those with the greatest health needs.

“This funding is an important win for the Australian health consumer who will benefit from more frontline primary health care practitioners on the ground. These professionals will be skilled in dealing with chronic and complex disease, something which is increasingly a part of many Australian’s lives.

“The Government’s commitment builds on APNA’s successful delivery of the previous Commonwealth-funded Nursing in General Practice (NiGP) Program, which was completed just last month. It will allow APNA to continue to support the roll out of high quality, safe, primary health care services that meet people’s needs.”

The Nursing in Primary Health Care Program has two main elements; chronic disease and healthy ageing initiatives and primary health care nursing recruitment and retention initiatives, with a range of projects covering each area. The Program will run until 2018.

ENDS