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\$2 million boost for intensive mental health support



People living with or at risk of severe mental illness in the north and west of Melbourne will have better access to care and support, thanks to new funding awarded to local mental health providers by North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network.

Leading youth mental health organisation Orygen, the National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health, has been awarded \$1.78m in funding to boost service availability and coordination for young people with severe mental illness. The funding will be directed to four key locations across Melbourne's north and west: Macedon Ranges, Sunbury, the city of Melton and Bacchus Marsh.

Orygen is partnering with Cobaw Community Health Services, Sunbury Community Health Centre, Djerrivarrh Health Services, Orygen Youth Health, Odyssey House Victoria, and the Youth Support and Advocacy Service (YSAS) to deliver the program of services.

The funding will also help build stronger connections between mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) services, breaking down barriers to care for young people with both mental health and AOD issues.

North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network CEO Adjunct Associate Professor Christopher Carter said improving access, care quality and experience for young people and their families is a critical goal for the funding.

"Young people who have, or are at risk of severe mental illness often need more support than is generally available in the primary healthcare system, but may not be eligible or able to access hospital based care," A/Prof Carter said.

“This new funding will help fill that gap, providing new and enhanced services for people who need more intensive support.”

Ms Liz Burgat, Director of Clinical Programs at Orygen, said the consortium was looking forward to tailoring services that best meet the needs of young people in each of the four areas.

“Drawing on our local, national and international knowledge and expertise in youth mental health, we look forward to working closely and collaboratively with our consortium partners, NWMPHN, local services and families in the north-west of Melbourne to further build local capacity and work to address the needs of young people who require a more complex level of mental health care,” Ms Burgat said.

Services will commence later this year following community and sector consultation, with funding to be provided over the next 18 months.

The new youth-focused services will be complemented by a \$420,000 extension of NWMPHN’s Intensive Support Service (ISS), which will now cover the cities of Melton, Moorabool and Hobsons Bay.

The Intensive Support Service funds credentialed mental health nurses, working in collaboration with general practitioners and psychiatrists, to support clinical mental health care, medication management and care coordination.

The Australian Primary Mental Health Alliance will operate the ISS in Melton and Moorabool, with cohealth to provide the service in Hobsons Bay. The new areas mean that the ISS is now available in all 13 local government areas across the NWMPHN region.

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ABOUT PHNs

Funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health, PHNs began operation on 1 July 2015 and are responsible for coordinating primary health care and facilitating improved health outcomes in their local community. Melbourne Primary Care Network operates the North Western Melbourne PHN.



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We acknowledge the peoples of the Kulin nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which our work in the community takes place. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.



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