

MEDIA RELEASE

New primary care centre to help free up hospital ED

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Albury Wodonga residents can now access free medical care for urgent conditions at a new Priority Primary Care Centre (PPCC).

Staffed by a team of GPs and nurses, PPCCs will assist people who need immediate medical care for non-life threatening injuries and illnesses.

The Wodonga PPCC will be operated by Sarkon Medical Centre in partnership with Albury Wodonga Health.

Practice Principal, Dr Niranjan Sarjapuram, said it was one of the best ventures of their six-year old practice.

“It has already been a fantastic opportunity for our staff, to learn new skills through their training at Albury Wodonga Health. This helped us put our policies and procedures to the test and work out the best way to address patient flow for the new centre ahead of its opening.”

The PPCC is one of 25 centres announced by the Victorian Government, and commissioned through Primary Health Networks (PHNs), to relieve pressure on nearby hospital emergency departments.

Albury Wodonga Health’s Chief Operating Officer, Emma Poland, described the PPCC as a much-needed service that will help patients with less urgent conditions get the help they need.

“Our emergency department staff do an amazing job in the most trying of circumstances” Ms Poland said.

“The Wodonga PPCC will mean more people in our community can access faster care for urgent but non-critical conditions like mild infections, fractures and burns – and it’ll help ease demand on our busy emergency department.

The centre will also help improve treatment times and reduce waiting times in the ED, while providing an alternative care pathway for non-emergency patients.”

Patients arriving at the PPCC will be triaged to determine their suitability for the service. Those requiring non-urgent regular medical care will be redirected to their regular GP for ongoing management.

Murray PHN CEO, Matt Jones, said PPCCs demonstrated what a great collaborative urgent care model could look like.

“Not only does the primary medical practice work with the local hospital, but ambulance services and other referrers are all involved to ensure that people get the right care, in the right place and at the right time.

“We know that general practice is increasingly under strain. Additional models of health care that can help to lessen the burden are a welcomed addition to both the primary and acute health care systems.”

Patients experiencing an emergency or life-threatening condition should not go to a PPCC but call an ambulance or, if able, head straight to the hospital emergency department.

The service will be provided free, even to those who do not have a Medicare card.

The Primary Priority Care Centre is located at 1A & 2, White Box Rise Shopping Centre, 81 Victoria Cross Parade, Wodonga and is open from 9am-6pm Monday to Friday, with extended hours from the week beginning 20 February.

Bookings can be made by calling 02 6064 1900.

To learn more about PPCCs, visit betterhealth.vic.gov.au/priority-primary-care-centres

About us:

Murray PHN is one of 31 PHNs (Primary Health Networks) around Australia working to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of primary health care and service systems. Across our region, we work with general practitioners (GPs), community health, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), pharmacy, aged care and allied health practitioners, and with acute services such as hospitals, specialists and emergency care.

The role of PHNs is to help to support and integrate the work of these important services to ensure that the people get the right care, in the right place, at the right time. In the Murray PHN region, which covers almost 100,000 sq km of regional Victoria, we work to develop and maintain sustainable models of primary health care for our communities.

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