

31 August 2023

Position Statement



Prevention

Background

The Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing sector calls for further investment in programs that focus on prevention, recognising that these programs have a proven ability to foster positive health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Fundamentally, prevention programs delivered by Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHO) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO) reflect the importance of how culture, Community and integrated care models significantly contribute to supporting a person/s whole-of-life journey.

Introduction

Health promotion (system design, reform, continuous quality improvement and equity) and prevention programs (concepted, designed, delivered and/or held) by ACCHOs and ACCOs are funded on a long-term basis, as are prevention programs that deliver critical services to children, young people and families.

VACCHO Position

ACCHOs and ACCOs provide robust, evidence-based prevention programs that support communities through the entirety of the life cycle – before birth to the Dreaming.

Prevention programs across the health, wellbeing and family services sectors, run by ACCHOs and ACCOs have proven to be successful in supporting strong and healthy communities, reducing the number of children and young people in out-of-home care, stemming entrance into the justice system, and ensuring that the mental health and wellbeing of communities is supported and fostered.

Holistic, community-led primary and secondary prevention programs that are trauma-informed and rooted in culture are essential for closing the gap, and supporting Aboriginal people to thrive, grow and live productive, meaningful lives. These programs demonstrate the effectiveness of place-based models of care.



The Victorian Government has demonstrated a commitment to funding community health services to deliver health promotion programs, recognising the importance of preventative care in supporting good physical and mental health. There needs to be a commitment from government for more substantial funding provided to specific integrated health promotion programs that are conceived, designed, delivered and/or held by ACCHOs and ACCOs.

Further, government should develop a universal understanding of health promotion in consultation and across sectors that mirrors the definitions of health promotion in the Ottawa Charter and that is reflected in funding and policy. An agreed universal understanding will include system design, reform, continuous quality improvement and equity. ACCHOs and ACCOs must also be supported to provide necessary, and culturally safe, health promotion programs.

Final reports from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System and Royal Commission into Family Violence outline the importance of Community-based prevention programs in supporting people to be well and to thrive. Numerous evaluations of Aboriginal family violence prevention programs demonstrated that sustainably funded prevention programs developed by Community – and that provide program integration and holistic approaches to care – deliver meaningful and significant outcomes.

Additionally, the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework (VAAF) (2018-2023) outlines the need for increased prevention programs to ensure that Aboriginal children are not placed in out-of-home care. The VAAF broadly calls for an increase in investment for prevention and early intervention programs, recognising that prevention helps to build strong and healthy Communities and families.

This is in line with Clause 55b of the Closing the Gap (CTG) Agreement which calls for the reallocation of mainstream prevention funding to Aboriginal organisations.

The Family Matters Report (2019) highlights the importance of birth and early childhood as critical transition times and recommends 'investing in quality Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled integrated early years services...' (p.92).

It is well documented that investing in preventative programs, which provide support for pregnant mothers and families with young children, will result in better health outcomes for Communities across the lifespan, saving billions of dollars in healthcare costs.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1:

State Government to ensure a greater proportion of the budget funding across all Government portfolios is allocated to prevention and that a greater proportion of this prevention funding is going to Aboriginal health and wellbeing services.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of prevention and early intervention in Aboriginal health and wellbeing with a commitment to a 10-year early intervention strategy with a breakdown point at five years.

References

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