



Northern Queensland Primary Health Network

Activity Work Plan

Core Funding

2019/20 – 2023/24



NQPHN acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Nation Peoples and the Traditional Custodians of this land. We respect their continued connection to land and sea, country, kin, and community. We also pay our respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging as the custodians of knowledge and lore.



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Disclaimer

All activities captured in this Activity Work Plan are identified in the Health Needs Assessment conducted by Northern Queensland Primary Health Network and have been approved by the Department of Health and Aged Care.



CF-COVID-PCS-5 – COVID-19 Primary Care Support

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Population Health.

Aim of activity

This activity will provide support for Australia's COVID-19 Vaccine and Treatment Strategy (Strategy) to the primary healthcare, aged care, and disability sectors.

This activity will provide support for the rollout of the Strategy until 31 December 2023.

Description of activity

Northern Queensland Primary Health Network (NQPHN) will provide guidance and support to General Practice Respiratory Clinics (GPRCs), general practices, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs), residential aged care facilities (RACFs), disability accommodation facilities, and governments on local needs and issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

NQPHN will support the Strategy as guided by key stakeholders and industry experts, including local service integration and communication, liaison with key delivery partners, and consistent reporting that will include:

- coordination of vaccination services to RACFs
- upon request, conduct a needs assessment in our region/s followed by a rapid expression of interest process to identify suitable general practices and GPRCs to participate in bespoke sections of the Strategy (for example establishment of additional GPRC sites) and provide advice to the Federal Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC) on the selection of those sites.



CF-COVID-VVP-7 – COVID-19 Vaccination of Vulnerable Populations

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Population Health.

Aim of activity

NQPHN will support and facilitate local solutions, in collaboration with COVID-19 vaccination providers, including general practice, pharmacy, contracted providers, state health services, and nurse practitioners (as appropriate), to vaccinate vulnerable populations who may have difficulty in accessing COVID-19 vaccines.

These vulnerable groups may include, but are not limited to:

- people experiencing homelessness
- people with a disability or who are frail and cannot leave their home
- people in rural and remote areas with limited healthcare options
- culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse people
- people who are not eligible for Medicare and/or live in an area without access to a state, territory, or Commonwealth Vaccination Clinic
- aged care and disability workers.

NQPHN will submit a COVID-19 Vaccination of Vulnerable Populations Plan, on the provided template, to the COVID Vulnerable Populations Taskforce for review and approval prior to commencing this activity.

This activity will be completed by 31 December 2023.

Description of activity

- Support general practitioners (GPs) with vaccinating vulnerable people using existing funding mechanisms (e.g. MBS items).
- Facilitate supplementary funding to reimburse additional and necessary costs incurred in delivering targeted vaccination services for these population cohorts as per Federal DoHAC directives.
- Develop and submit a COVID-19 Vaccination of Vulnerable Populations Plan as per Federal DoHAC directives.

CF-COVID-LWC-9 – COVID-19 Positive Community Care Pathways

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Population Health.

Aim of activity

This activity aims to support and strengthen the health system to manage the anticipated increase in COVID-19 cases as Australia progresses its National COVID-19 response. With high levels of vaccination coverage, many of these cases will have mild symptoms and will not require hospitalisation. This activity will support the effective and efficient community care management of COVID-19 patients outside of hospitals and provide confidence and assurance to the community and health professionals in NQPHN's region.

NQPHN will work in partnership with each Hospital and Health Service (HHS), GPs, and other stakeholders (e.g. the Aboriginal community-controlled health sector) to develop or update regionalised COVID Community Care Pathways.

Description of activity

NQPHN will collaboratively develop COVID Community Care Pathways that:

- provide clear treatment and escalation pathways through the local northern Queensland health system to support both primary care and hospitals so they are not overwhelmed or treating patients in clinically inappropriate settings
- are consistent with the overall national and Queensland Health COVID-19 positive community care pathways and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) guidelines for care of COVID-19 positive patients
- are responsive to the needs of at-risk populations, including people in RACFs, older Australians, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, people with a disability, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups, and people in socioeconomically disadvantaged circumstances
- support efficient testing arrangements, including after-hours access to assessment and care
- clearly delineate between formal hospital in the home arrangements (where a doctor admits the patient to receive care delivered by a hospital) and where the patient does not require admission and can be cared for in the community (GP-led care).

NQPHN will provide a completed Living with COVID Community Pathway Plan to the Living with COVID Taskforce for review and approval.



CF-COVID-LWC-10 – Support for Primary Care from the National Medical Stockpile

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Population Health.

Aim of activity

This activity supports the management of COVID-19 positive cases in the community through access, compliance arrangements, and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and pulse oximeters from the National Medical Stockpile (NMS) to individual primary care practices within the NQPHN region. This includes distribution to general practices, GPRCs, and ACCHOs.

This is in addition to the current obligations of NQPHN to facilitate access to PPE as described under Tranche 4 and 5 Guidance, or where there is a major outbreak or a hotspot has been declared by the Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer.

This activity will be completed by 31 December 2023.

Description of activity

- Facilitate, on behalf of the Australian Government DoHAC, the distribution of PPE to health practitioners as per the Australian Government DoHAC PPE guidelines.
- Develop and implement processes to facilitate access to supplementary PPE bundles and pulse oximeters for general practices willing to provide healthcare for COVID-19 positive patients and pharmacists participating in the COVID-19 vaccination program.



CF-COVID-LWC-11 – Commissioned Home Visits

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Population Health.

Aim of activity

NQPHN will engage clinical service providers (e.g. medical deputising services, nurse practitioners, and practice nurses) to undertake home visits to provide care to COVID-19 positive patients, where their GP does not have capacity, where a person does not have a managing GP, or during the after-hours period where the regular GP is not available. This service will integrate with a person's regular care team.

NQPHN will seek approval from the Living with COVID Taskforce prior to implementing its commissioned home visits model of care.

Description of activity

- Facilitate the commissioning of home visits services in northern Queensland as per the Australian Government DoHAC commissioned home visits guidelines.
- Collect data from commissioned home visit service providers and provide reports to the Australian Government DoHAC.
- Seek approval from the Living with COVID Taskforce prior to implementing a commissioned home visits model of care.



CF-1 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Establishment Support

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

Aim of activity

The aim of this activity is to increase access to early intervention and preventive health programs in primary care, including the delivery of timely and equitable access of adequate, inclusive, culturally appropriate primary health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Description of activity

- Continue to support the establishment and capacity of Torres Health Indigenous Corporation (THIC) and Palm Island Community Company (PICC) to increase access to early intervention and preventive health programs in primary care.
- Continue working relationships between Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) and NQPHN to ensure needs are met.
- Continue the innovative student-assisted community rehabilitation and lifestyle service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and scope further communities within Cape York to expand to.



CF-2 – Maternal and Child Health

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Population Health.

Aim of activity

The aim of this activity is to improve the health and wellbeing of children and families through access to integrated, coordinated, accessible, and culturally safe maternal and child health services across North Queensland, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people living in rural and remote areas, and those experiencing social and economic disadvantage.

Description of activity

- Continue collaborating with partners of the Better Health North Queensland (BHNQ) Alliance and First 1,000 Days Project Working Group to implement the recommendations from the recently developed joint First 1,000 Days Framework and draft Implementation Strategy for North Queensland.
- Commission maternal and child health services (first 1,000 days), based on the recommendations from the draft Joint Implementation Strategy, with a particular focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people living in rural and remote areas, and those experiencing social and economic disadvantage.
- Co-commission and partner (where appropriate) on initiatives which align with the First 1,000 days draft Joint Implementation Strategy, that interface with upstream prevention activities, or tertiary services.
- Work collaboratively with internal NQPHN Teams, including Primary Care Engagement and Workforce Development to address opportunities that emerge from the First 1,000 days Framework and Implementation plan.

CF-3 – Chronic Conditions

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Population Health.

Aim of activity

The aim of this activity is to improve the health outcomes of individuals with chronic conditions through increased access to primary health care services, where they are most needed and improve integration between primary, specialist, and acute health services, with a focus on people living in rural and remote communities, those experiencing social and economic disadvantage, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Description of activity

- Utilise the NQPHN Chronic Conditions Strategy for North Queensland to focus on key priorities as highlighted within the Health Needs Assessment to inform future commissioning decisions.
- Align the NQPHN Chronic Conditions Strategy (2022) to include a focus on chronic conditions in First Nations people as a priority population group as per NQPHN's commitment to the BHNQ Alliance.
- Commission and implement GP and allied health multidisciplinary primary care initiatives designed in alignment with the NQPHN Chronic Conditions Strategy.
- Utilise the NQPHN Chronic Conditions Strategy (2022) to collaborate on service system support initiatives within the greater NQHPN Team.
- Commission health services based on the recommendations from the NQPHN Chronic Conditions Strategy, with a particular a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people living in rural and remote areas, and those experiencing social and economic disadvantage.
- Co-commission and partner (where appropriate) on initiatives which align with the NQPHN Chronic Conditions Strategy, that interface with upstream prevention activities, or tertiary services.
- Work collaboratively with internal NQPHN Teams, including Primary Care Engagement and Workforce Development to address opportunities that emerge from the NQPHN Chronic Conditions Strategy.
- This activity links with and will also be informed by work under the commissioning early intervention activities to support healthy ageing and ongoing management of chronic conditions.



CF-5 – Health promotion and prevention

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Health promotion and prevention.

Aim of activity

This activity aims to reduce key risk factors for chronic conditions and poor health outcomes through increased access to healthy lifestyle programs, health literacy initiatives, and health promotion messaging.

Description of activity

- Develop a comprehensive and evidence-based health promotion strategy and sector development plan for North Queensland. This strategy will guide health promotion commissioning, integration, workforce development, and marketing activities.
- Health literacy cross activity with 3.2 and 4.1 – Undertake or support health promotion campaigns and initiatives which encourage healthy living for people through a focus on preventative measures, health literacy, and healthy behaviours, with a particular focus on vulnerable population groups.
- Quality improvement cross activity with HSI3 – Undertake a marketing campaign to complement general practice quality improvement activities focusing on childhood vaccinations and screening for cervical, bowel, and breast cancers.
- Health promotion and prevention cross activity with CF1.6, CF3.5, and CF4.7 – Commission services which encourage healthy living for people through a focus on preventative measures to support healthy nutrition, physical activity, behaviour change, social inclusion through activities, promotion of immunisation, regular health assessment, and routine screening for cancers.



CF-6 – Health Workforce Development

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Workforce.

Aim of activity

This activity aims to develop approaches to address health workforce priorities and build workforce capacity and capability in North Queensland, in collaboration with key stakeholders, peak bodies, and primary care providers.

In partnership with local, state, and national bodies, NQPHN aims to address the identified health workforce shortages and support new, innovative, and multidisciplinary models of care building an available capable workforce to collaboratively manage patient care.

Description of activity

- Enhancing primary care provider capabilities and capacity to deliver quality, safe care to at risk and priority populations as defined in the NQPHN HNA.
- Continue to facilitate the North Queensland Health Workforce Alliance to improve health workforce quality, capacity, and distribution in North Queensland.
- Explore, develop, adopt, and participate in initiatives that promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce parity through training, education, and career pathway development.
- Continue to partner on health workforce optimisation and enhancement initiatives to improve the optimisation and diversification of the primary care workforce through upskilling existing and new workforce.
- NQPHN will support primary care providers to recruit clinicians for communities with identified critical health workforce shortages and support the adoption of innovative workforce models and their implementation.
- Support primary care providers to improve the quality of clinical practice through opportunities and access to quality education and training that maintains core qualifications and adopts new models of care and healthcare delivery.



CF-7 – Chronic and Complex Disease CQI Program 2024-25

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Population Health.

Aim of activity

Digital technologies are becoming a major part of the health system impacting on the way we deliver primary care. Many healthcare professionals are struggling to stay sufficiently informed of the technology available to them and their patients and the benefits of adopting such technologies.

The Chronic Conditions Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) (Advanced Primary Care) will raise awareness of the potential benefits of using digital technologies to treat patients with chronic or complex conditions to:

- decrease administration burden
- improve the quality of care
- increase the effectiveness and efficiency of care
- support patient literacy and self-management.

Description of activity

The activity will use a multi-pronged approach:

- face-to-face communication and support
- education and events
- training modules
- technology enhancements
- patient self-management and literacy.



CF-8 – Flood recovery

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Flood recovery.

Aim of activity

This activity has provided community and clinical support to the regions affected by the February 2019 floods. NQPHN recruited two flood recovery positions, based in Townsville, who engaged with and built resilience in the community and assisted with health recovery activities.

NQPHN will also continue to resource the low intensity service, NQ Connect to provide 24/7 support and referral pathways to those affected by the floods.

Description of activity

8.1 Community engagement and capacity building resilience

- Two flood recovery coordinator positions were created to support the engagement and resilience coordination in the community.

8.2 Clinical services

- NQ Connect expanded to provide services to members of the community affected by the floods.

8.3 Health Service Improvement

This activity included:

- expanding social services staff PHA / mental health training
- identifying primary health care staff for disaster recovery training
- expanding health pathways disaster module in Townsville and Cairns.



CF-9 – Infectious Diseases

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Population Health.

Aim of activity

The aim of this activity is to collaborate with partners to address infectious diseases of public health significance and high prevalence, impacting priority population groups in North Queensland.

Description of activity

- Work with partners on joint approaches to infectious disease priorities in North Queensland, such as the Rheumatic Heart Disease Action Plan, North Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sexually Transmitted Infections Action Plan, and the Better Health NQ Health Master Service Plan.
- Leverage off the NQPHN Chronic Conditions Strategy for North Queensland and the First 1,000 Days Framework to inform a focus on key infectious diseases within the NQPHN region and inform future commissioning and health service integration priorities.
- Work collaboratively with internal NQPHN Teams, including Primary Care Engagement and Workforce Development, to address emerging priorities.



HIS-1-GN3QVQJ – Consumer Dementia HealthPathways

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Digital Health.

Aim of activity

The improvement of dementia consumer pathways and resources in parallel with clinical HealthPathways reviews one of the key recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Over three years, NQPHN will consult with consumers and peaks to identify any gaps in key resources and publish, promote, or develop health literacy to support those living with dementia, their families, and carers (HNA 2022-25, p.24 and p89).

Description of activity

- Conduct a broad local consultation to inform the review or creation of consumer resources that supports consumers, carers, and families to manage their dementia care.
- Identify gaps and opportunities in the model of care for people living with dementia and find resources to support these gaps leveraging peaks.
- As required, develop localised consumer resources for older people, their families, and carers to support informed choices about health and aged care services of benefit and share these resources through the PHN network.



HIS-2 – Health Systems Improvement

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Population Health.

Aim of activity

NQPHN will undertake a broad range of activities to assist in the integration and coordination of health services in our regions, including through population health planning, system integration, stakeholder engagement, and general practice support.

These activities will also support NQPHN with commissioning health services in our region, including through the monitoring and evaluation of all commissioned services.

This activity aims to:

- address the needs of people in the NQPHN local region, including an equity focus
- provide support to general practices and other health care providers to improve the quality of care for patients
- improve patient's access to primary health care
- improve the coordination of care for patients and the integration of health services in the NQPHN region
- operate capable organisations which support the successful delivery of the PHN program.

Description of activity

- Undertake a needs assessment of our region, informed by stakeholder engagement and community consultation.
- Conduct a broad range of activities to support health system integration and stakeholder engagement. Influence the integration of health systems to improve outcomes relating to mental health, First Nations, population health, health workforce, digital health, aged care, and alcohol and other drugs as well as any emerging health priorities determined by the Department of Health and Aged Care. Ensure staff are trained in cultural awareness and ACCHO guiding principles as appropriate.
- Support general practice – quality care through best practice, accreditation, and participation in the NQPHN data program, quality improvement tools, digital health, team-based care, health reform activities, advocacy, and workforce education and training.
- Implement the general practice (GP) data dashboard, leveraging off the Primary Health Insights (PHI) infrastructure.
- Commence the implementation of Primary Sense across our region.
- Work with the Queensland Planning Reporting and Evaluating working group (PHNs) to progress data sharing agreements with Queensland Health to support joint regional planning and co-commissioning.



HIS-3 – HealthPathways

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Digital Health.

Aim of activity

HealthPathways offers clinicians locally agreed information to make the right decisions, together with patients, at the point of care.

HealthPathways is designed and written for use during a consultation. Each pathway provides clear and concise guidance for assessing and managing a patient with a particular symptom or condition. Pathways also include information about making requests to services in the local health system.

Content is developed collaboratively by general practitioners, hospital clinicians, and a wide range of other health professionals. Each pathway is evidence-informed, but also reflects the local reality, and aims to preserve clinical autonomy and patient choice. HealthPathways serves to reduce unwarranted variation and accelerate evidence into practice.

Description of activity

- NQPHN will contribute funding for each local Hospital and Health Service's HealthPathways in North Queensland – Far North Queensland (Torres and Cape, and Cairns regions), Townsville, and Mackay HealthPathways.
- NQPHN will drive the establishment of an NQPHN HealthPathways Community of Practice (CoP) to develop priorities for new and reviewed pathway development.
- Host and facilitate veteran and defence HealthPathways reviews and workshops.
- Promote the use of General Practitioner Specialist Referral (GPSR) specialist advice to GPs.



HIS-4-GL7DGRB – Aged Care and Dementia HealthPathways

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Digital Health.

Aim of activity

HealthPathways offers clinicians locally agreed information to make the right decisions, together with patients, at the point of care.

HealthPathways is designed and written for use during a consultation. Each pathway provides clear and concise guidance for assessing and managing a patient with a particular symptom or condition. Pathways also include information about making requests to services in the local health system.

Content is developed collaboratively by general practitioners, hospital clinicians, and a wide range of other health professionals. Each pathway is evidence-informed, but also reflects the local reality, and aims to preserve clinical autonomy and patient choice. HealthPathways serves to reduce unwarranted variation and accelerate evidence into practice.

This activity will end on 30 June 2025.

Description of activity

- Develop aged care and dementia referral pathways relevant to the health needs of the NQPHN region, for use by clinicians during consultation with patients, to support assessment and referral to local services and supports.
- Where an existing aged care and dementia HealthPathway is already in place, NQPHN and HHS partners will monitor, review, and improve the pathway to ensure its currency, accuracy, and consistency with medical best practices and local services.
- Conduct broad local consultations to inform the review or creation of referral pathways that reflect contemporary best practice dementia care.
- Identify gaps and opportunities in the model of care for people living with dementia.
- Develop localised consumer resources for older people, their families, and carers, supporting informed choices about health and aged care services of benefit to them.



HIS-5 – GP Data Program

Activity priorities and description

Program key priority area

Digital Health.

Aim of activity

The aim of this activity is to:

- improve general practice's data quality for optimal patient care
- support general practice accreditation attainment
- improve the management of chronic disease and patient population management
- assist with continuous quality improvement (CQI) activities
- reduce the risk of medically avoidable adverse events
- identify opportunities to maximise appropriate utilisation of MBS billing
- increase the optimised use of clinical software knowledge and skills for patient information management
- facilitate practice improvements, streamline business processes, and support sustainability
- meet changing requirements for health reform activities.

Description of activity

- Provide general practices with clinical data optimisation tools, training, support, and education.
- Support practices to utilise their clinical data to improve clinical safety, patient care, quality improvement, and accreditation attainment.
- Provide monthly benchmark reports with financial reviews to support practice sustainability.
- Quality improvement cross activities – develop and deliver targeted continuous quality improvement activities that address NQPHN Health Needs Assessment priorities.
- Actively participate and support the PHN National Quality Improvement Collaborative, providing leadership and coordinated development to implement a national PHN and General Practice Quality Improvement program.
- Continue to support the use of the Primary Health Insights platform for timely delivery of general practice reporting and population health insights.

