

## **Hon Stephen Wade MLC** Minister for Health and Wellbeing

Thursday 18 April 2019

### **Priority care centres to ease pressure on EDs**

Patients with non-life threatening injuries and illnesses will soon be able to get the care they need without needing to go to a hospital emergency department, with the Marshall Liberal Government establishing community treatment sites across metropolitan Adelaide.

Four Priority Care Centres will be trialled this winter in an attempt to provide more timely treatment for patients and reduce long waits in emergency departments.

Minister for Health and Wellbeing Stephen Wade said the centres will be co-designed by GPs, SA Health and Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and will offer a model of care as an alternative to attending a public hospital emergency department.

“We all know that winter is a busy time for our hospitals. This year, there will be an enhanced focus on hospital avoidance, preventing deterioration, and out of hospital services,” Minister Wade said.

“We are improving South Australia’s health services to deliver high quality care, while at the same time easing pressure on our emergency departments and delivering care closer to home.

“It’s better for the patient and it’s better for our busy hospitals.”

SA Health is now seeking Expressions of Interest for the collaborative venture to provide expanded medical and social care services, in a bid to reduce the numbers of less urgent presentations in our emergency departments.

A feature of the Priority Care Centres will be timely access to onsite treatment, community-based support services, SA Health telehealth facilities, and radiology, pathology and pharmacy services.

The centres will be GP led and managed with support from local hospital staff trained in acute assessment and care to ensure any person with more complex needs receives the treatment they require, including direct admission to hospital.

The target cohort will be lower acuity adult patients such as those presenting with minor sprains and strains, suspected fractures, sporting injuries, minor cuts and wounds, general pain, early pregnancy complications, urinary tract infections and mental health issues.

“For too long we have focussed at the acute end of the patient journey, after it is too late to keep people healthy or treat them in a less invasive way. The Marshall Liberal Government is focussed on the patient before they get so unwell that they require hospital admission. It’s part of our long-term plan to deliver more community care closer to where South Australians live,” Minister Wade said.

“As part of the pilot, patients who are deemed to be clinically stable and not needing hospital care may be encouraged to attend one of the Priority Care Centres.

“For the first time, SA Health has analysed patient data to identify areas which have high volumes of patients presenting to public hospital EDs. The centres will be located in these “hot spots” in the north, outer north, south and west regions of metropolitan Adelaide.

“The data shows that about 70 per cent of people who present to EDs do not need to be admitted to hospital, however the number of people presenting to EDs continues to grow. A significant proportion of people presenting do not require acute care and can be safely treated in a community setting.

“While we are moving focus from within hospitals to alternative, but appropriate, community care, patients will always be triaged to ensure they are receiving the best care and access to the services they need.

“Priority Care Centres will form a key plank of the Marshall Liberal Government’s winter demand strategy.”

Adelaide Primary Health Network CEO, Deb Lee, said the centres will present an opportunity to work collaboratively with SA Health.

“The Priority Care Centres will link excellent levels of health service across acute and primary care to create a more integrated health system,” Ms Lee said.

The centres are expected to open in June.

Applications for Expressions of Interest close on 30 April 2019. More information can be found at <https://www.tenders.sa.gov.au/>.