

Changes to Mental Health Referral Pathway

The referral pathway for PHN-Commissioned Mental Health Services is changing. HNECC PHN will move forward with the Australian Government's transition to a Head to Health Statewide Intake and Assessment Hub & Spoke Model.

In this new Hub & Spoke model, the Intake and Assessment (IAR) will occur centrally, and the referrals will be managed locally by a service funded by each PHN. We anticipate this will result in a better experience for the consumer.

Key elements of this model include:

- A single service provider delivering the Head to Health IAR phone service on behalf of the NSW PHNs. The workforce will be centrally managed and will deliver the service to all consumers in the nine NSW regions. All referrals will be clinically assessed, and the Commonwealth's Initial Assessment and Referral Decision Assist Tool will be applied to inform the most appropriate referral pathway within the stepped care continuum.
- Consumers will only speak with one clinician when interacting with the service, and
- Locally based Spoke staff will work with the centrally managed IAR service to refer consumers to appropriate supports in their region when required.

Due to this change, from 1 October 2024 referrals will be directed to the statewide commissioned Intake and Assessment Hub to be assessed before the Referral Spoke service allocates the referral to local mental health services. Referrals to PRIMA will cease and will no longer be managed by HealthWISE. It is important to note that all PHN commissioned mental health services will continue to be delivered by the existing local providers.

HNECC PHN wishes to express our appreciation to HealthWISE for their dedication to delivering the PRIMA service to the New England Community.