

Media Release

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KEEPING YOUNG CANBERRANS HEALTHY

Directions Health Services continues to expand its primary health outreach services and has launched a trial Teen Clinic designed to provide young Canberrans a free, welcoming and easily accessible place to seek health care and advice.

“Our outreach services are based on the idea that traditional health care delivery does not suit everyone and that as a result, some members of our community may fall through the gaps. The demand and growth of these services has proven that if you can take health care directly to people in need, they will access care earlier and health outcomes will improve,” Directions Health Services CEO, Bronwyn Hendry said.

Directions Health’s newest outreach service is a weekly Teen Clinic which operates out of YWCA’s MURA Lanyon Youth and Community Centre.

Teen Clinic is a nurse-led, early intervention model of access to primary health care for teenagers, providing a free drop-in service.

Teen Clinic provides local teenagers with the opportunity to talk to a qualified nurse about a range of health issues, in a non-judgmental environment. The nurses are there to inform and support young people to make educated, healthy choices.

Young people attend Teen Clinic for a wide range of issues such as general health concerns, STI screening, contraception advice, health education, advice and support around substance use and mental health issues, as well as relationship concerns, homelessness or family issues. They can attend by themselves, or with family members or friends.

“While Teen Clinic has only been running since the beginning of Term One this year, it is already being exceptionally well utilised,” Ms Hendry said.

“The success of the Teen Clinic model is based on building trust and relationships with young people and the community. Teen Clinic is delivered in partnership with YWCA and has established relationships with local services in the Lanyon Valley. We work closely with a number of organisations, including Lanyon High School staff, Lanyon Pharmacy, Conder Surgery, Interchange Co-op Tuggeranong, Gordon Family Practice, Anglicare at Gordon and The Junction. Tuggeranong Rotary have provided some financial support that can be used to purchase medication for young people unable to afford them.

YWCA A/CEO, Cara Jacobs, said she is very excited about the new service. “Local young people are already visiting MURA, and the Teen Clinic provides an additional support service they can access while here”. However, she stressed that “Teen Clinic is available to all local young people, whether or not they are currently accessing Mura, attending any of the local high schools or are not engaged in school”.

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“Directions decided to trial Teen Clinic, following consultations with the local Lanyon Valley community. These consultations indicated a drop-in health service for teens could make a real difference in the lives of many young people in the region, particularly those who have difficulty accessing health care”, Ms Hendry said. “Although we don’t have ongoing funding for Teen Clinic, the six month trial will enable us to gauge the success of such a service. We hope that during that time we will be able to secure the financial support required to keep it running long-term.”

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