

New funding ensures a bright road ahead for Sunny Street

The road ahead for mobile doctor and nursing outreach service Sunny Street is looking bright, with the help of 12 months funding from not-for-profit commissioning agency Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN.

PHN Senior Manager Robb Major said Sunny Street provides primary healthcare and complex coordination services for homeless and vulnerable individuals and families living on the Sunshine Coast and in Gympie.

“There are approximately 1800 people experiencing homelessness on the Sunshine Coast and many more experiencing complex vulnerability,” said Mr Major.

“That might mean having no fixed address, living with addiction or mental health issues and lacking the resources to make and keep appointment in a general practice setting.

“At Sunny Street, they can gain much needed access to medical advice, diagnosis and treatment from health professionals, in a safe and welcoming environment, free from judgment.”

Founded in July 2018 by Medical Director Dr Nova Evans and Nursing Director Sonia Goodwin, Sunny Street also provides healthcare to women and children living in domestic violence refuges, women and men after incarceration and children leaving juvenile detention centres.

Sunny Street co-founder and Medical Director Dr Nova Evans said the physical and mental health challenges facing those experiencing homelessness were often confronting.

“We see patients coming in who are using everything from toilet paper and rags from Bunnings to sanitary pads strapped to their limbs for wound care,” said Dr Evans.

“Some of our clients have little or no health literacy, and as a result of childhood trauma, intergenerational violence and dependencies, or even simply bad luck, have found themselves in an insecure living situation and in most cases, homeless.

“Our aim is to not only connect people to treatment and services, but ultimately connect them with a sense of community as well, to help them not only survive, but eventually start to thrive.”

Operating out of a mobile van and at pop up clinics at local organisations like the Maroochydore Outreach Centre, The Shak in Nambour and the Salvation Army in Gympie, Sunny Street has recently also started to expand their vital services into the Brisbane area.

“We provide a range of health care services at all of our clinics, from general health assessments, immunisations and sexually transmitted infection treatment, to cervical screening, chronic disease management and support and health education and promotion,” said Dr Evans.

“We are also big on social prescribing, and our GPs and nurses can refer patients to a range of non-clinical services, as a way to help people take greater control of their own health.”

Interviews are available with both Dr Nova Evans and Sonia Goodwin, along with the PHN's Robb Major.

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