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### **New research project offers hope for mental health outcomes**

Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN is delighted to announce that it has been awarded a \$500,000 grant by Bupa Health Foundation to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of mental health services in the region.

PHN CEO Pattie Hudson said the collaborative research project would identify how people were accessing mental health services to identify gaps and obstacles.

“We are working in partnership with Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, Abt Associates, university partners and stakeholders across primary and acute care to improve the quality of mental health services available and tailor them to better meet people’s needs,” Mrs Hudson said.

The PHN will work in partnership with university partners and Brisbane-based population health intelligence organisation Abt Associates will undertake the evaluation to identify:

- How are people prioritised through the health system?
- Are they getting the best outcomes?
- What are people’s health journey when seeking treatment for their mental health condition?
- Are there gaps in accessing services?

“The research project will use evidence to determine the patterns of service usage across the system, but it will also be informed by the voices and experiences of those that use these services. As far as we know, this will be the first system-wide evaluation of the mental health system that includes a consumer perspective,” Mrs Hudson said.

“This funding from Bupa Health Foundation will allow us to find out if people are being directed to the right services in the first place, for example are they ending up in hospital when they don’t need to be? Could they have accessed the care they needed while staying in their home?

“We value the experiences of people at all stages of their mental health journey to ensure we can improve services, provide a better safety net to stop people slipping through the gaps, and provide better support for people living with mental illness and their carers.”

The PHN commissions mental health stepped care services across the region. Stepped care offers access to the most appropriate mental health services at any given time, allowing people to step up and down to different levels of care as their needs vary.

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