

How Tasmanians with chronic health conditions access primary health care

Recently, there's been discussion about how Tasmanians living with chronic health problems access appropriate and affordable care, and what can be done to make it easier for them to do so.

In our work, Primary Health Tasmania both commissions services specifically for people living with chronic health conditions, as well as collating and analysing health information with a view to identifying gaps and finding solutions, where access to appropriate care can be difficult.

We welcome the focus on better co-ordination and integration of local health services, including primary health care, because a well-integrated system means people are supported to stay well, and out of hospital, by getting the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

What are health outcomes – and how is that different to 'access'?

Many factors contribute to poor health outcomes, such as a person's income, education, housing situation, and access to transport. We broadly refer to these factors as 'social determinants of health'.

Access to health care is a complex issue. Someone may have good access to health care but poor health outcomes because of the social conditions in which that person lives and works.

Who provides primary health care to socially and economically disadvantaged people in Tasmania?

General practice plays a key role in caring for all Tasmanians.

Approximately 85% of Tasmanians visit a GP each year, while around 13% of Tasmanians are admitted to a public hospital and 16% visit a public hospital emergency department.

Almost half of the people who visited a GP in 2019 were from the most socioeconomically disadvantaged portion of the population. Of this group, our information shows the most disadvantaged saw a GP about three times more often than those in the most socially advantaged portion of the population.

GPs play a vital and consistent role in providing care to those Tasmanians living with poor social determinants of health.

What would help improve health outcomes for all Tasmanians?

Complex issues like improving health outcomes within our state's health system require a collaborative approach.

That's why Primary Health Tasmania supports a 'whole-of-system' approach to improving our state's health outcomes, for the benefit of all Tasmanians. That means that all players in the field – from GPs and other primary healthcare professionals, to hospital staff, to policymakers and consumers with lived experience – have a role to play in contributing to an integrated, effective health system.

Primary Health Tasmania Limited
1300 653 169
info@primaryhealthtas.com.au
www.primaryhealthtas.com.au
ABN 47 082 572 629

