

2020

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**ACT Government Response – Auditor-General No. 7 of 2020 –  
*Management of care for people living with serious and continuing  
illness***

**Presented by  
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## Introduction

The ACT Auditor-General's Report No. 7 was provided to Assembly members out of session on 10 September 2020 and is published on the ACT Audit Office website.

The Report raises oversight and governance issues relating to the approach by the ACT Health Directorate (ACT HD) and Canberra Health Services (CHS) to chronic conditions. Specifically, the Audit focused on the activities of the Chronic Disease Management Unit in Canberra Health Services, and the Coordinating Committee for Primary Health Care and Chronic Conditions, as well as governance and activity in relation to four key documents:

- *The National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions (2017);*
- *The ACT Chronic Conditions Strategy 2013–18;*
- *The Bilateral Agreement on coordinated care reforms to improve patient health outcomes and reduce avoidable demand for health services; and*
- *The ACT Statement of Commitment for Primary Health Care and Chronic Conditions.*

The Report's principal focus was on the ACT Government's strategic approach to driving system-level improvements related to chronic conditions management, rather than the ongoing management or delivery of services, for those with chronic conditions.

The Audit report makes five recommendations, all of which have been accepted by the Government.

## Response to Recommendations

### Recommendation One

*The ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) and Canberra Health Services (CHS) should determine what ACT-specific response is warranted to the ACT Government's commitment to the National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions (2017), how this should be achieved, and by whom. In order to do this, ACT-specific challenges and priorities should be identified and responded to.*

### Agreed

The ACTHD and CHS will work together to develop an ACT specific response to the *National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions (2017)* (the National Framework). The Chronic Conditions Working Group will develop a coordinated and strategic approach to improve health care for Canberran's with chronic conditions (to replace the ACT Chronic Conditions Strategy 2013–18). The ACT response will reflect an integrated model of care.

### Recommendation Two

*As part of the ACT's response to the National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions (2017) the ACTHD and CHS should identify and promote the development of partnership arrangements that are capable of implementing chronic disease management improvement strategies in the ACT. In doing so they should:*

- a) identify the organisational and mutual goals and objectives to be achieved from the different partnership arrangements and their contribution to chronic disease management in the ACT; and*
- b) clearly identify roles and responsibilities of the various groups and fora that have been established through these partnership arrangements.*

### Agreed

Improved integrated care relies on effective partnerships between all levels of government, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), private sector, industry, researchers, academics, communities, individuals, carers and families.

ACTHD and CHS will build on existing collaborative relationships internal and external to ACT Government, in addition to forging new collaborations to achieve better outcomes for Canberrans with chronic conditions and identify opportunities to improve the operation of the ACT health system.

The Chronic Conditions Working Group will oversee the strategic direction and management of work in relation to chronic conditions, with a particular focus on the roles and responsibilities of each directorate, supporting NGO, and group/fora.

### **Recommendation Three**

*CHS should improve the transparency and accountability of the Chronic Disease Management Unit by developing a performance framework for its activities including identified outcomes and associated performance indicators for its services and programs.*

#### **Agreed**

CHS will improve transparency and accountability by developing a clear, measurable performance framework for the Chronic Disease Management Unit. It will be framed on the broader strategic work being undertaken in partnership between the ACTHD and CHS, and will ensure that the metrics used to measure performance are meaningful to consumers accessing the service.

### **Recommendation Four**

*CHS should establish how it intends to progress the Chronic Disease Management Unit and the services and programs it currently provides. This should include:*

- a) examining and re-articulating the principal purpose of the Unit, and the models of care it supports;*
- b) identifying how each service or program improves the integration of chronic care provision in hospital, community and primary care settings across the ACT;*
- c) identifying how each service or program contributes to the overarching vision and strategic direction for the management of chronic conditions in the ACT, in the light of the ACT Government's response to the National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions (2017); and*
- d) particular attention being paid to the Chronic Care Program.*

## **Agreed**

In reviewing its services and programs as recommended by the Auditor General, CHS will draw on its work on a major strategic priority under the *Canberra Health Services Strategic Plan 2020–2023* - to be 'a partner to improve people's health'. To implement this, CHS is currently undertaking a program of work with the key focus of integrating care across the whole health sector within the ACT, establishing partnerships and tackling barriers to health care, with a focus on those with chronic conditions.

The Chronic Disease Management Unit, under the supervision of the Division of Medicine and Emergency Executive Team, will be a part of the next step in this program of work, reviewing its services and programs as recommended by the Auditor General's report, and implementing the agreed directions through the Division's performance management cycle in 2020-21.

## **Recommendation Five**

*CHS and the ACTHD should develop and implement a model for working in partnership with non-government and community-based organisations for the delivery of chronic disease management programs and services.*

*The model should identify and articulate the agencies' intention to:*

- a) provide visible leadership and invest commensurate time and effort where commitments have been made to working in partnership;*
- b) undertake shared planning;*
- c) facilitate joint responsibility;*
- d) achieve equal commitment to activities;*
- e) hold a shared vision of the program or service's outcomes; and*
- f) develop high-level trust across partners, based on knowledge and expertise.*

## **Agreed**

ACTHD and CHS will lead a collaboration with consumers, carers, the Capital Health Network, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and community health service providers to address these systemic issues. This will include consultation for the development of a model of integrated care, being developed in partnership between ACTHD and CHS, which will occur in late 2020 and early 2021.

The delivery of chronic disease management programs and services in the ACT is often achieved through NGOs. Stakeholder consultation for the co-design of a commissioning process for the chronic conditions and primary care subsector, as part of the ACTHD NGO Procurement Project, will occur in 2021. The procurement and subsequent contracting process will be finalised by June 2022.

The commissioning/procurement of services focusing on chronic conditions will seek to achieve a shared vision and be aligned with the National Framework, and with a number of complementary ACT plans and priorities. Consistent with the National Framework, the procurement of services addressing chronic conditions will prioritise those services aimed at prevention, support and priority populations.