

Health Minister announces Australian-first eating disorders trial for Sunshine Coast

Families across the Sunshine Coast welcomed today's announcement by Health Minister the Hon Greg Hunt of \$3.2 million to fund an innovative trial to improve access and affordability of eating disorders treatment.

Butterfly Foundation CEO, Christine Morgan congratulated the Australian Government for its leadership and commitment to deliver Australia's first trial of a best practice evidence-based approach to eating disorders treatment in primary health.

"It is the ray of hope hundreds of thousands of Australians have been looking for," she said.

"This is a significant advancement in helping identify how Australia's health system can deliver best-practice treatment for eating disorders."

The three-year trial will be coordinated by Butterfly Foundation and Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN.

"Butterfly Foundation welcomes the opportunity to work closely with the team at Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN to deliver integrated care based on best practice to Australians in need of these services," said Ms Morgan.

"Their participation in this trial will be a significant milestone for change, and we applaud and thank Minister Hunt for his foresight and commitment to delivering this ground-breaking public health commitment to treatment of eating disorders in Australia.

"Butterfly knows affordability and access have been barriers to seeking and continuing treatment for too many Australians. By trialling a primary health evidence-based model, we are taking a key step towards delivering affordable and integrated multidisciplinary eating disorders treatment within Australia."

Sunshine Coast GP, Dr Jon Harper looks forward to the commencement of the program later in 2018.

"Treatment of eating disorders falls at the intersection between physical, mental and allied health services, so by providing wrap-around care to an individual with an eating disorder, a qualified team can intervene early to provide care coordination and the right treatment for the best health outcomes," he said.

"While the acute care sector may be necessary for many people with eating disorders, we are pleased to be able to offer this additional service for people who can safely be treated outside a hospital setting.

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“We will be utilising the latest digital health technologies to equip GPs with the information and resources to respond with best practice treatment pathways and referral processes.”

PHN CEO, Adjunct Associate Professor Pattie Hudson congratulated the Government on its support of innovative approaches to primary health, and its commitment to developing a robust evidence base for future treatment.

“Health sector reform is a key component of the role of Primary Health Networks, and only by exploring new models of treatment, can we identify the most effective approaches to ensure the best health outcomes for the people in our communities.

“By bringing together a coordinated team of primary health professionals with the acute sector – underpinned by a network of researchers, experts, and of course, people with lived experience – we have the opportunity to build something greater than the sum of our parts; an integrated approach to eating disorders that will inform the future of how we treat eating disorders in Australia.”

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Editor and Producers noted: Please include the following support line details in all media coverage of this story.

HELP AND SUPPORT

Anyone needing support with eating disorders or body image issues is encouraged to contact **Butterfly Foundation’s National Helpline** on **1800 33 4673** or support@thebutterflyfoundation.org.au

For urgent support call Lifeline 13 11 14

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