

Patient Satisfaction: Nurse Led Models of HIV, Sexual Health and Hepatitis C Care in Rural Communities

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Background/Purpose:

Southern NSW Local Health District (SNSWLHD) covers an area of 44,534km² along the NSW South Coast, Southern Tablelands, Great Dividing Range and Snowy Mountains. Three Local Government Areas (LGAs) within SNSWLHD are considered more disadvantaged than the Australian average. The SNSWLHD Publicly Funded Sexual Health Service (PFSHS) uses Nurse led models of care, providing outreach HIV, Sexual Health and Hepatitis C services across eight locations.

Navigating this expansive health system is complex and challenging. Particularly when trying to access confidential HIV, Sexual Health and Hepatitis C care due to the associated stigma and discrimination people face in rural communities. Given the sensitive nature of the services provided, a Patient Reported Experience Measure (PREM) survey was conducted to assess whether the PFSHS were clinically effective and experienced positively by consumers.

Approach:

A tailored PREM survey was developed, offering consumers an anonymous platform to share their experiences. The survey included questions on service satisfaction, appointment availability, communication, safety and respect. To ensure accessibility and inclusivity, a flexible approach was provided to encourage involvement, clarifying the voluntary nature fostering a safe space for honest feedback.

Outcomes/Impact:

The PFSHS achieved an outstanding 100% overall PREM satisfaction score in all key areas. Every respondent reported feeling respected, safe, and supported, with comments highlighting the emotional and holistic impact of the care received. Examples include:

- “Felt free to share my story for the first time with a nurse.”
- “The service you provide to our community is greatly appreciated”

Innovation and Significance:

The significance demonstrated the strength of the nurse-led model of care, with its emphasis on empathy, continuity, and community connection to combat stigma and discrimination when accessing HIV, Sexual Health or Hepatitis C care particularly in rural areas of NSW.

This initiative confirmed the high standard of service delivery and provided a roadmap for continuous improvement, ensuring the service evolves with patient needs and system-wide goals.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Nil