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right **place**
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phn
WESTERN NSW
An Australian Government Initiative

WNSW PHN Integrated Team Care Program

Information for the General Public and FAQs

(Updated September 6, 2022)

What is the ITC Program?

The ITC Program aims to improve outcomes for Aboriginal people through better access to coordinated and multidisciplinary care and improve access to culturally appropriate mainstream primary care services.

What Is Marrabinya?

Marrabinya is the name of the service delivered by Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation since November 2016 under the WNSW PHN ITC Program, which is funded by the Australian Government.

Is Marrabinya being shut down?

WNSW PHN, at no time, has planned for ending or de-funding the ITC Program. However, changes to how the ITC Program is delivered may mean that Maari Ma may choose to not continue using the Marrabinya name in the delivery of services they will be responsible for under the revised ITC Program or Maari Ma may choose to retain its use.

Why is ITC being revised?

WNSW PHN regularly undertakes program reviews to ensure the effectiveness of the programs we fund in providing real benefits to our region's residents. The existing ITC Program's revision followed region-wide stakeholder and community consultations that were undertaken between July 2021 and February 2022 that identified several improvement areas required to deliver better outcomes for patients.

Is there a cut to ITC Program funding?

There is no change to the overall amount of funding being provided by the Australian Government or WNSW PHN for ITC Program services. Under the revised ITC Program, funding will be distributed to each service provider, rather than once centralised agency.

What Improvements will be delivered under the revised ITC Program?

Care coordination will be included in the revised ITC Program to aid patients to navigate often complex pathways to the level of care each person requires, including gaining access to specialist services.

Local delivery of the program will also feature in the revised program, to ensure the service can be tailored to specific community and individual requirements, while also aligning with National Guidelines.

This means that the ITC Program will be delivered by local people for local people. Both measures have been identified as being able to boost the effectiveness of the ITC Program and result in more people getting access to the chronic disease care they require and enjoying improved health and wellbeing.

The new model also meets one of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Goals, to build capability and capacity of the Aboriginal Sector.

Who has been involved in co-designing the new ITC Program?

The region's Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS), Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS) and other key stakeholders have been involved in the co-design of the revised program.

Who will be contracted to provide the revised ITC Program?

All AMSs within the WNSW PHN region have now been offered a direct contract to manage the delivery of service directly to their patients, while also having the option to contract other organisations to deliver the service on their behalf.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with a Chronic Illness will be able to access the ITC Program from January 1, 2023, via their local AMS, and WNSW PHN is now working with the following service providers already having secured their contract to provide the program:

- Bourke Aboriginal Corporation Health Service
- Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service Ltd – covering Walgett and Brewarrina AMSs
- Condobolin Aboriginal Health Service Ltd
- Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation
- Coonamble Aboriginal Health Service – covering Coonamble, Dubbo, Gilgandra AMSs.
- Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation – based in Broken Hill
- Orange Aboriginal Medical Service
- Peak Hill Aboriginal Medical Service Inc.
- Yoorana Gunya Family Healing Centre Aboriginal Corporation - based in Forbes

Discussions are continuing with one final AMS that is also set to join the program.

In addition to this, WNSW PHN is also currently securing providers via a tender process to offer additional access points to care through the ITC Program.

When will the revised ITC Program come into effect?

The Marrabinya Program is continuing with full funding to the end of December 2022, and the new ITC Program will become fully operational as of January 1, 2023, to ensure no disruption to services.

The new services are commencing in in two stages.

The first stage is the region's Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations which have been funded to establish services from 1 July 2022. The second stage is the providers of Aboriginal patients from mainstream general practices who will be establishing services from 1 November 2022.

Maari Ma was provided an extension of the existing ITC contract through to 31 December 2022. This is to allow a staged transition with a focus on patient wellbeing and continuity of services. Maari Ma has been asked to support to transition patients with all new providers of the ITC services, ACCHOs and mainstream general practice.

How will existing program patients access the care they need?

WNSW PHN is working with service providers to ensure that patients already accessing care through the ITC Program are continually being kept up to date during the transition period to ensure their level of care is not compromised. We will also be ensuring that their transition into the revised ITC Program is as smooth and easy as possible.

How will WNSW PHN support AMSs during the transition period?

Meetings are being planned and held now as WNSW PHN works to ensure that AMSs are well prepared to deliver the revised ITC Program in its entirety from January 1, 2023.

Major points of support for AMSs include:

- Ensuring each provider fully understands Commonwealth Government's ITC service provision requirements.
- Enabling each provider to optimise the ITC Program model for it and the patients it cares for.
- Ensuring patients are well informed and experience a smooth transition of service.
- Ensuring services are fully transitioned into full operation by January 1, 2023.

WNSW PHN thanks those who have contacted us with their concerns regarding the Marrabinya Program. We appreciate that so many of our residents and primary healthcare partners are just as invested as we are in seeing constant improvements in the delivery and access to programs and services that benefit the health and wellbeing of people living in our region.

The health and wellbeing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents remains to be the number one strategic goal of the Western NSW Primary Health Network, and we are committed to improving the health outcomes for all indigenous residents through enhanced delivery and access to each of our relevant programs.

WNSW PHN ITC Program information can be found at <https://wnswphn.org.au/itc>.

Yours Sincerely,



Andrew Coe
Chief Executive Officer