

Southern Inland Health Initiative

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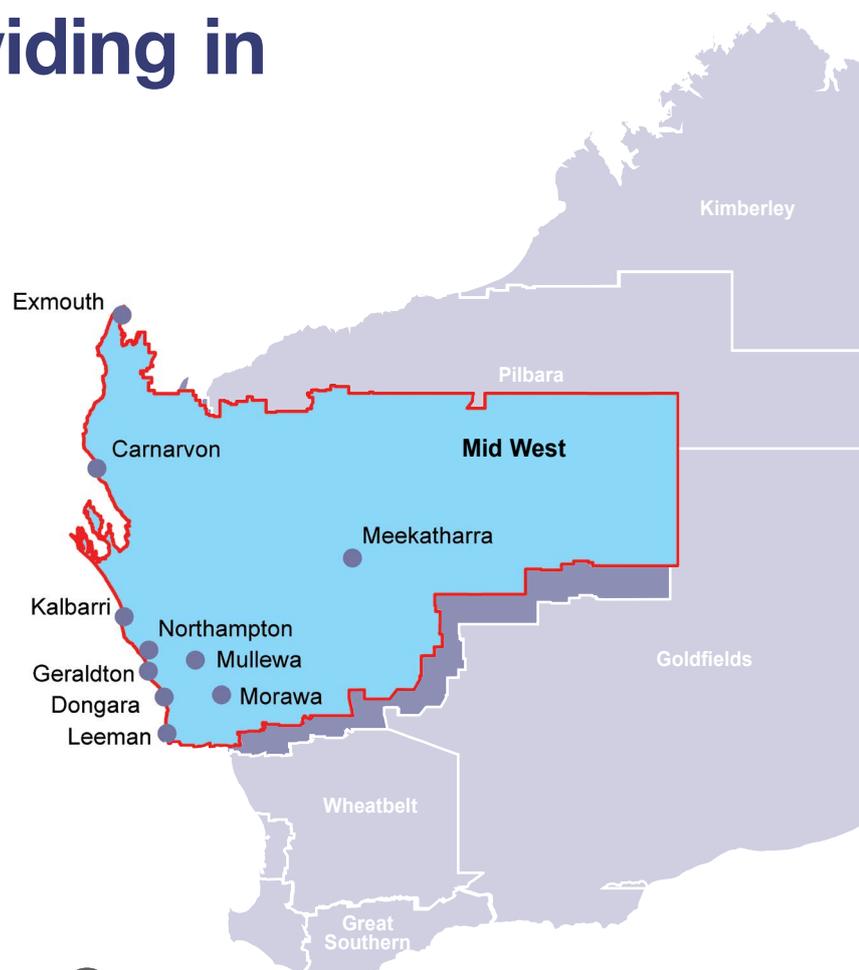
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What is SIHI providing in the Midwest?

The Southern Inland Health Initiative (SIHI) is a half a billion dollar investment by the State Government's Royalties for Regions program that's transforming health care throughout the southern inland region of WA, including towns in the Wheatbelt, South West, Great Southern, Midwest and Goldfields.

Delivered by the WA Country Health Service, SIHI is the single biggest investment in country health in the State's history. A recent evaluation report shows country people in the regions covered by SIHI are receiving safer, better and more reliable health care, with significant improvements in emergency care and access to GPs.

To read the *SIHI Program Evaluation – Preliminary Key Findings March 2016* report, [click here.](#)



Residents in Midwest towns and surrounding communities are now benefitting from the following health initiatives and improvements thanks to this historic health investment:

Providing better access to doctors and emergency care

SIHI is significantly improving emergency medical care by using modern technology, and by supporting more doctors to live and work in the country. The success of the SIHI program is clear – in the community, there has been a 67 per cent increase in the number of GPs staying in regional communities in the four years since SIHI began. In local hospitals and health care centres, SIHI is improving the safety and quality of care by improving support for the medical workforce.

In the Midwest region, the following SIHI initiatives are contributing to communities getting better access to GPs, improved emergency care and a stronger country health service:



Strengthened medical workforce

SIHI is helping the local medical workforce deliver high quality care, by giving incentives to GPs to work in the following Midwest towns: Kalbarri, Northampton, Mullewa, Morawa, Three Springs, Perenjori, Carnamah, Mt Magnet, Cue, Yalgoo and Meekatharra.



New district medical model to encourage GPs to stay in country towns

To encourage the attraction and retention of doctors providing services in WACHS facilities, including in the Midwest region, SIHI is supporting collaboration between GPs, enhanced flexible work options, education and training opportunities and collegiate support.



Emergency Telehealth Service

Please change par to: Doctors and nurses treating critically ill and injured patients in emergency departments (EDs) can now speak to highly trained emergency specialists via videoconferencing, which ensures country patients receive the best care. The Emergency Telehealth Service (ETS) is now at Kalbarri, Northampton, Dongara, Three Springs, Morawa, Mullewa, Mt Magnet, Cue, Meekatharra and Yalgoo.



Incentives for GPs to provide primary care services and Aboriginal health services

SIHI offers financial incentives to GPs to deliver primary care services and Aboriginal health services in Kalbarri, Northampton, Mullewa, Dongara, Morawa, Three Springs, Perenjori, Carnamah, Mt Magnet, Cue, Yalgoo and Meekatharra.

Your local District Health Advisory Council (DHAC)

The local District Health Advisory Council (DHAC) works in partnership with the WA Country Health Service to improve the delivery of health services in their health district.

DHAC members share experiences with local

health service providers to improve consumer-centred care and services. To find out more, visit www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au and search for 'District Health Advisory Councils'.

Your Midwest DHAC Chairperson is Merle Isbister who can be contacted on 9956 2209.

Providing health care closer to home

SIHI has significantly increased the range of local health services that bring care closer to home and help people to avoid hospital.

In partnership with non-government and community organisations, SIHI is building a more sustainable rural health system. In the Midwest region, the following can now be accessed thanks to SIHI:



Primary Health Care Centres

Refurbishments at Mullewa and Dongara are creating Primary Health Centres that will be one-stop-shops for primary health services in these communities.



Outpatient services via telehealth

Midwest patients can use a free videoconferencing service for a wide range of clinical services, so they don't have to travel to Perth for appointments. Telehealth is available for clinics such as burns, wounds, pain management, speech pathology, gastroenterology, neurology, urology and paediatrics. Patients can use telehealth from their local health services in Kalbarri, Northampton, Dongara, Three Springs, Morawa, Mullewa, Mt Magnet, Yalgoo, Cue and Meekatharra .



Tele-mental Health

Midwest clients can have appointments with their psychiatrist and/or therapist (psychologist, social worker etc) from their home towns via videoconference, instead of having to make the journey to the regional health centre at Geraldton.



Diabetes Telehealth

A partnership between WACHS and Diabetes WA to enhance diabetes education and clinical services for people across WACHS, including the Midwest region, using videoconferencing. Phone 1300 136 588 or visit the Diabetes WA website at www.diabeteswa.com.au 🖱️

Existing services

Services introduced in the Midwest under SIHI are provided in addition to the WA Country Health Service (WACHS) programs that were already available. WACHS continues to offer Aboriginal health, child health nursing, school health nursing, immunisation, occupational therapy, speech pathology, physiotherapy, social work, dietetics, diabetes education and mental health services throughout the region through scheduled visits and telehealth.



Diabetes services make accessing expert advice easy

The Southern Inland Health Initiative is investing more than \$2 million providing services and programs in regional WA to tackle the increasing incidence of diabetes.

One of these services, Diabetes Telehealth, was launched in April 2015. The service delivers diabetes education to regional clients via videoconferencing with health service professionals, reducing the need for patients to travel long distances to seek support.

Retired farmer John McDougall has taken charge of his diabetes thanks to the Diabetes Telehealth service.

Developed through a partnership between the WA Country Health Service and Diabetes WA, the service fills the gaps in towns where diabetes educators are not available or not easily accessible to regional clients.

Mr McDougall didn't feel he needed much help with managing his diabetes, but was interested to try out the

Diabetes Telehealth service. The service involves a video-conference with a diabetes educator.



Retired farmer John McDougall

“Because of the video-conference, I became more interested in my own health. It's not good being in denial for any of these health issues, and it definitely overcomes the problem of availability to doctors,” Mr McDougall said.

He said he had discovered that diabetes treatment had changed over the years and he had learnt new ways to manage his medication.

To find out more about Diabetes Telehealth, contact 1300 136 588.

Providing upgrades to hospital and health service facilities

SIHI is investing \$300 million to upgrade 37 hospital and health service facilities across the Wheatbelt, South West, Midwest and Great Southern.

In the Midwest, Dongara and Mullewa health services will undergo renovations to be transformed into modern

primary care centres. Upgrades will ensure the facilities continue to be equipped to deliver contemporary models of care now and in the future.

Construction is expected to begin by August 2018 and be completed by mid-2019.

Next steps for SIHI

SIHI is transforming the regional health landscape in the southern inland region of WA.

The results of the first evaluation of SIHI are very encouraging. The program will continue to be assessed and future possible funding models are being developed to continue critical programs beyond SIHI's completion in June 2017.

You can keep updated on the latest SIHI news by signing up for the SIHI e-newsletter, which will be issued monthly.

If you have any queries about SIHI, please contact us by emailing southerninland@health.wa.gov.au 🖱️

You can also visit the SIHI website at www.health.wa.gov.au/southerninland 🖱️

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