Regional, Rural or Remote Services



Introduction

Health services in regional, rural and remote NSW: If you live in a regional area, there might be challenges to accessing doctors and health services. Sometimes there are fewer medical services in your area, or you may have to wait longer to see a doctor.

How to find a service

Regional areas are diverse. You may live in an area with access to many services, or you may live in a small town where you need to travel a long way to access a doctor or a specialised health service.

Local Health Districts connect all public health services in NSW. Each area of NSW is supported by a different local health district. You can contact your local health district to get advice on what health services are available to you.

You can also speak to your local youth service or health service to find out about what other services are available to young people in your area. There may also be local services that can support you in different areas of your life.

> *Knowing where the local hospital is, how long it takes to get there, and how you can travel there can be helpful if something happens to you.*

It is also useful to know when and how often the local doctor visits your area. If it's a life-threatening situation, you should call triple zero (000).

Travel and Accommodation services

If you live in a regional area and need to see a specialist doctor in another area or city, you might be able to get financial support to help pay for travel and accommodation. This will help you pay for costs during your treatment. To find out if you are eligible, visit Enable NSW (IPTAAS).

Visiting the doctor

It can be difficult visiting the doctor or a health service in a rural area. It might be a small community and you may be concerned about your privacy or feel embarrassed about what you need to see the doctor about.

It's important to know that doctors are legally obliged to keep your information private.

It's your right to confidential (private) healthcare. But if you still feel uncomfortable you can access services in a different town, online or over the phone.

Another way to approach feeling awkward visiting a doctor in your town is to have a discussion with them about your privacy, ask them what will happen if you share private information with them and why you feel uncomfortable. You can also get support from your local youth centre.

For more information see Visiting the doctor.

If you want to learn more about services in your area:

- Visit or call your local community facility, such as library, community or neighbourhood centre or youth service
- Health Direct: have an online search for health services in your area
- Local Health District: visit your LHD website for programs in your area
- Australian Indigenous Health Info Net: have an interactive map of the Community Controlled Services that are available in NSW
- QLife: have an Australia-wide anonymous, LGBTIQA+ peer support community referral database
- Resources and Services: for a directory of NSW wide health services including online and over the phone support

Online and over the phone health services

You might choose to access services over the phone or online if you can't travel to the nearest town to visit a doctor or want to keep your health issue private.

For some specialist appointments, you might be able to use telehealth, especially if it's far away.

If you would like to book a telehealth appointment, contact your local health service to talk through it. If telehealth is available in your area the specialist or health service can organise an appointment for you.

If you have a health issue that is not life threatening, it might be helpful to access a health service over the phone or online.

If you want to find out more about online health options, visit our Resources and Services directory.

Regional, Rural or Remote Support Services and Resources

Additional services

For more information visit Health Direct.

- Health Direct: health advice for non-urgent assistance. Call 1800 022 222 (24 hours)
- Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health: support for mental health in rural and remote communities. Call the Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511 (24 hours).
- Lifeline: for mental health support 13 11 14 (24 hours) or you can text or chat to them from the website.
- Family Planning Australia: for sexual health and pregnancy 1300 658 886 (M-F 8.30am to 5pm).
- Resources and Services: for more health services throughout NSW.