

# The Royal Perth Hospital Homeless Team

THE FIRST 18 MONTHS OF OPERATION

People experiencing homelessness have disproportionately high health needs, high rates of chronic physical, mental health and substance use issues.

## Who was supported by the RPH HT?

**634** patients experiencing homelessness



**69%** male

**31%** female

**42** average age

**29%** Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

**71%** Rough sleeping/temporary accommodation <sup>1</sup>.

## In the 12-months before the RPH HT ...

**2,118**

presentations to RPH  
Emergency Department



**868**

inpatient admissions



**2,133** days  
admitted

## The Royal Perth Hospital Homeless Team

- The Royal Perth Hospital Homeless Team (RPH HT) is a collaboration between Royal Perth Hospital, Ruah Community Services and the Homeless Health Care General Practice (HHC).

### Improves outcomes for homeless patients by:

- Supporting patients admitted to hospital
- Improved discharge planning
- Linking them with HHC and community based services



## Health Profile of RPH HT Patients

**28%** hepatitis B or C

**26%** injuries (including fractures)

**35%** depression/anxiety

**13%** schizophrenia

**44%** alcohol and other drug issues



1. At first contact with the RPH HT

# Key Findings

The RPH HT has an essential role in supporting patients during their hospital admission and ensuring they are linked with community-based services.

## Reduction in high-frequency presenters to RPH ED



35%

reduction in the proportion of homeless patients in the top 20 most frequent presenters to RPH ED



Seeing the team in action was inspiring and the service they provide is transformational - they engage with patients' humanity and taking every aspect of their complex situation into consideration.

These patients are no longer just triaged and delivered back onto the street until next time. When these patients meet with this highly skilled team, they are finally 'seen' and they enter a system where they receive care that is fit for purpose. They are linked into its extensive community partnerships with an exemplary commitment to a duty of care."

Christina Pollard  
EMHS Principal Policy Consultant



The Homeless Team is a very necessary and valuable part of RPH. I had a patient last week who had a history of homelessness and had just been evicted again from her home. She was quite unwell and was probably going to have a long hospital stay. She was overjoyed when the Homeless Team visited her in our ward as she said she knew them well. She said that they understood her situation and treated her in a non-judgemental and sensitive way. From being quite down her mood changed after meeting them to being more optimistic about her future

Registered Nurse, RPH

This summary was produced from the findings reported in:

Gazey A, Vallesi S, Cumming C, Wood L. (2018). Royal Perth Hospital Homeless Team: A report on the first 18 months of operation. University of Western Australia; Perth, Western Australia.