



05 Jul 2017
West Australian, Perth

Author: Cathy O'Leary • Section: General News • Article type : News Item
Audience : 153,763 • Page: 18 • Printed Size: 433.00cm² • Market: WA
Country: Australia • ASR: AUD 7,591 • Words: 444 • Item ID: 804769595

isentia.mediaportal

Licensed by Copyright Agency. You may only copy or communicate this work with a licence.

Street medics in need of funding

Cathy O'Leary
Medical Editor

A service that delivers basic medical care to people living on the streets of Perth has been forced to set up a crowd-funding campaign after its funding ended last week.

The Street Health program, which has been run by Homeless Healthcare for the past 18 months, is staffed by nurses and outreach workers and operates on weekday mornings.

Nurses provide basic medical care such as wound dressings and blood pressure and diabetes checks.

The program received a two-year grant from the philanthropic group Impact100 WA in 2014 to run a pilot program and another small grant, but the funding ended on June 30. The service has not obtained funding from the Health Department. A fundraising campaign has raised \$12,000.

Founding doctor Andrew Davies said the service was helping to prevent hospital presentations by people who were homeless and often had multiple complex health needs. Many had untreated physical and mental health problems.

"The need for this service continues to grow and with the current climate of economic downturn, widespread job losses and the lack of affordable housing, we are seeing increasing levels of homelessness in WA," Dr Davies said.

Shelter WA's Stephen Hall said Street Health was working with Perth's most vulnerable rough sleepers.

He called on the WA Government to fund the program for three years.

"At a time when the Government is looking to curb health costs, the amount required to run the Street Health service is minuscule when compared to the potential cost savings and reduced drain on the WA Health system," he said.

Dr Amanda Stafford, who works at Royal Perth Hospital's emergency department, said she saw first-hand the number of homeless people in the inner city. "Street Health is the eyes on the street for the most marginalised of the rough sleepers in the Perth CBD, who never seek out medical attention," she said.

"But they also find really sick people in parks, in doorways and other public places and bring them to RPH emergency department before they die on the streets."

University of WA researcher Associate Professor Lisa Wood said early data showed the Street Health team was diagnosing and treating health issues that, if left neglected, would require more expensive hospital care.

A Health Department spokeswoman said funding arrangements for the homelessness service had not changed.

"In the current financial cli-

mate, all government agencies are required to ensure that spending is carefully planned . . . to achieve the best value for money for those . . . who need the most assistance," she said.

To donate go to chuffed.org/project/streethhealth



05 Jul 2017
West Australian, Perth

Author: Cathy O'Leary • Section: General News • Article type : News Item
Audience : 153,763 • Page: 18 • Printed Size: 433.00cm² • Market: WA
Country: Australia • ASR: AUD 7,591 • Words: 444 • Item ID: 804769595

isentia.mediaportal

Licensed by Copyright Agency. You may only copy or communicate this work with a licence.



Martene Seminara, of Homeless Healthcare, which has resorted to crowd funding. Picture: Sharon Smith