



Health 2040:
Advancing
health, access
and care



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Acknowledgements

The Victorian Government would like to acknowledge and thank the individuals and organisations from across the health sector and broader community who contributed to the development of *Health 2040: Advancing health, access and care*.

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Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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ISBN 978-0-7311-7107-1 (Print)

ISBN 978-0-7311-7108-8 (Online)

Available at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/health-strategies>

Printed by TDC3, Richmond on sustainable paper (1611006)



Ministerial foreword

Good health is important, and ensuring all Victorians can achieve their best possible health and wellbeing is one of the government's most important responsibilities.

Victoria has one of the most efficient health systems in the world, but the way that we think about healthcare services needs to grow and change with our communities. There are new challenges on the horizon. Our population is ageing, and chronic diseases are becoming more prevalent. That means thinking differently about how we deliver care.

Now is the time to take a stronger focus on the prevention and early intervention services that will allow us to meet this challenge and prevent illness in the future. We need to redouble our efforts to provide integrated, holistic care that recognises that physical, mental and other health issues are integrally linked. We need to build services around multiple needs, both within health services and

beyond, linking with and drawing on other services and the strengths and skills of communities, families and carers.

We now understand the impact of a person's circumstances and their environment on their health, and that people who are economically disadvantaged are much more likely to suffer poor health. We know that a 'one size fits all' approach doesn't work for a diverse community, and that we have not done enough to support people who are disadvantaged or suffering from stigma and discrimination. We need to do more to ensure that Victorians share good health outcomes.

There are unprecedented opportunities to deliver better care and better outcomes. The growth of new technologies and techniques is delivering new innovations, treatments and service models that were unimaginable years ago. Information technology is providing new ways to access

services and to better inform our choices.

These and other innovations will also help us put people at the centre of health care, helping them to work in partnership with health professionals and other service providers to determine what is right for them, and providing opportunities for them to have a greater voice and a greater choice in their health care, as well as helping people take better care of their own health.

Every day, our health providers work hard to deliver fantastic services for our communities. Victorians who work to build stronger communities, workplaces and families also have an important part to play. We thank them for their effort, and for their support in developing this vision.

This document is about getting ready for the future. We look forward to continuing to work together with all Victorians to deliver better health, better access and better care.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jill Hennessy".

Hon Jill Hennessy MP

Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Foley".

Martin Foley MP

Minister for Housing, Disability and Ageing
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Equality
Minister for Creative Industries

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What you told us

We invited Victorians to contribute their views on the future of Victoria's health system.

Through a health reform Summit and from public submissions, we heard that the system offers great care to most people, and has a dedicated, highly-skilled workforce. Yet many people noted the challenges and opportunities of the changing health landscape, and called for courageous action. You made clear you want system transformation that is responsive to the changing needs of your community.

The following ten principles summarise that feedback:

1. **Person-centred care with equitable access** – valuing and respecting people and their preferences, taking into account the whole person and what is important to them, and addressing disparities in access and outcomes
2. **Integration** – ensuring that patients experience services as one system, and receive care tailored to their needs
3. **Prevention and early intervention** – investing in preventing poor health and acting earlier so that serious illness is avoided wherever possible
4. **Technology and data** – sharing information across providers, making better use of the information we have and using new technologies to improve patient care and outcomes
5. **Workforce** – making better use of the skills and capabilities of our workforce and using their expertise to inform service design and delivery
6. **Transparency and accountability** – improving transparency and accountability to drive improvement
7. **Evidence-based care** – ensuring interventions are evidence-based, reducing low-value care, and translating new evidence into better service delivery
8. **Sustainable** – ensuring the way we allocate resources delivers the greatest value and benefit for individuals now and into the future
9. **Innovation** – systemic innovation that is responsive to the changing needs of the community
10. **Medical research** – strengthening medical research, and translating new discoveries into improved treatments, technologies and tools.

These principles are reflected throughout the vision for the future of the health system.

The need for change

In Victoria, most people enjoy a high standard of health and wellbeing, but good health isn't shared evenly. Demand for care is also growing and changing fast, and to keep Victorians healthy into the future, our health system needs to change.

Patients, carers and the workforce need a greater say

The people with the greatest expertise in our health system are the people who rely on services, their families and loved ones, and the workers who provide care and support. Patients, carers and workers want to share their expertise and play a core role in designing how services and the system as a whole works. Listening to people's diverse experiences and ideas, and acting on them, will help create a better health system and better healthcare.

More chronic disease requires more integration and prevention

More than half of Australians now have at least one chronic disease. This dramatic shift requires real change to how we think about health and how we deliver care.

There is too little emphasis on preventing chronic disease, with slow progress in reducing

risk factors such as obesity. When chronic disease does develop, people often need advice and treatment from a range of different professionals. Care is often fragmented, hard to navigate and can involve duplication or inconsistent advice.

Not all care reaches the same high standard

The standard of care is usually excellent, but some patients suffer avoidable harm. Each year, there are too many potentially preventable complications during hospital care. Not all of these can be avoided, but making progress towards zero harm is our top priority.

Health gaps between different communities are too great

For many Victorians, their background or identity comes with much higher risk of poor health. They include Aboriginal Victorians, people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse and intersex (LGBTI), people with a disability,

and people who live in regional, rural and outer urban areas. People who are socially or economically disadvantaged are also more likely to suffer ill-health, particularly chronic disease.

Ill health can also compound disadvantage. The large health gaps that affect these groups are unacceptable and progress to reduce them has been much too slow.

Innovation can do more to prevent sickness and improve care

Victoria leads Australia in medical research, but we can do more to align research with the needs of Victorian patients, and to quickly translate new findings into standard practice.

Plenty of innovation also happens on the front line. Dedicated doctors, nurses and allied health staff come up with new ideas everyday as they strive to deliver better care. Too often, these ideas remain isolated in one clinic, hospital or part of the state. The whole health system should be geared towards testing these ideas and making sure the best ones are adopted everywhere.

A vision for health in 2040

Our vision is for all Victorians to have:

- **better health – skills and support to be healthy and well**
- **better access – fair, timely and easier access to care**
- **better care – world-class healthcare every time.**

Preparing for the future means predicting and planning for change – shifts in population, disease, technology and climate. It is even more important to be clear about our values and goals, and to build a health system that embodies them.

This document lays out our vision, the strategies we will use to achieve it, and how we will track our progress. Every two years, we will report on our continued progress. The focus is on efforts by the Victorian Government, but

our vision cannot be achieved without shared effort from the Commonwealth Government, Primary Health Networks and healthcare providers, workers, patients, families and communities across the state.

Health 2040 – goals and strategies

Better health	Better access	Better care
<p>What we will achieve</p> <p>A system geared to prevention as much as treatment</p> <p>Everyone understands their own health and risks</p> <p>Illness is detected and managed early</p> <p>Healthy neighbourhoods and communities encourage healthy lifestyles</p>	<p>What we will achieve</p> <p>Care is always there when people need it</p> <p>More access to care in the home and community</p> <p>People are connected to the full range of care and support they need</p> <p>There is fair access to care</p>	<p>What we will achieve</p> <p>Target zero avoidable harm</p> <p>Healthcare that focuses on outcomes</p> <p>People are active partners in care</p> <p>Care fits together around people’s needs</p>
<p>How we will get there</p> <p>Reduce statewide risks</p> <p>Build healthy neighbourhoods</p> <p>Help people stay healthy</p> <p>Target health gaps</p>	<p>How we will get there</p> <p>Plan and invest</p> <p>Unlock innovation</p> <p>Provide easier access</p> <p>Ensure fair access</p>	<p>How we will get there</p> <p>Put quality first</p> <p>Join up care</p> <p>Partner with patients</p> <p>Strengthen the workforce</p> <p>Embed evidence</p> <p>Ensure equal care</p>

Better health

Our vision is about:

- a system geared to prevention as much as treatment
- everyone understanding their own health and risks
- illness being detected and managed early
- healthy neighbourhoods and communities that encourage healthy lifestyles.

Why it is important

A growing number of Victorians have preventable diseases, including some cancers, heart disease and diabetes. People need support earlier to prevent illness before it develops, or stop it from getting worse. Over time, this will also prevent unnecessary demand for healthcare.

The risk of a person developing a preventable illness is affected by social and economic factors, as well as their environment and lifestyle. Prevention needs to work at several levels at once, using population-wide measures, with communities working together, and with individuals gaining the knowledge and skills to manage their own health, supported by information, technology and expert advice.

Where we will focus

Reduce statewide risks

The government will tackle risks that affect health across the whole population, with measures such as:

- cutting pollution
- providing fluoridated drinking water
- increasing vaccinations
- reducing violence and discrimination
- discouraging harmful behaviours such as smoking, drug use and unhealthy diets.

More broadly, the government will promote social, economic and educational opportunities for everyone. An inclusive society and a dynamic economy make an important contribution to health and wellbeing. In turn, better health and wellbeing supports participation and stimulates the economy.

Build healthy neighbourhoods

Where people live and spend time affects their health and wellbeing. The built environment, access to products and services, and having green and recreational space in neighbourhoods can make it easier to lead a healthy lifestyle.

The government will partner with local communities to identify and act on local health concerns and issues affecting diverse communities. A community's goals may include better access to healthcare, access to safe and secure housing, safer roads and transport, or promoting fulfilling employment and quality education.



Help people stay healthy

Understanding how healthy we are, the risks that could affect our health, and how to manage our health conditions allows us to take charge of our own health and wellbeing.

Specialised health promotion services, advice from health and social services, new websites and apps, advertising campaigns, and school education are some of the ways the government will make sure every Victorian is supported to build health literacy and maintain their best possible health.

Alongside these efforts, healthcare providers will be supported to identify and address health risk factors (such as smoking and obesity) with their patients and clients as part of ensuring that all Victorians have the best possible care.

Target health gaps

Some groups and communities suffer a much higher risk of preventable disease. The Government will measure and report on health disparities between different communities, such as those that affect Aboriginal, LGBTI, refugee and asylum seeker, migrant, and regional and rural Victorians.

These gaps will drive investment. They will also focus efforts on designing and testing new prevention approaches in close partnership with the people they are designed to help. The result will be health information and prevention services that are easy to understand, relevant and culturally appropriate.

New tools will also be developed to provide more accurate estimates of the health risks for individuals, informing how services can be targeted and tailored to support people who are at the greatest risk.

Measure progress

We will measure progress by:

- improving rates of self-reported health and wellbeing
- increasing immunisation coverage rates at two years of age and at school entry
- reducing inequalities in life expectancy
- reducing risks such as obesity, smoking, harmful alcohol and drug use, and physical inactivity
- reducing the burden of preventable conditions, including preventable cancers, and reducing inequalities in the rates of these conditions
- reducing the level of continuing risk for victims of family violence
- reducing the suicide rate
- increasing participation in healthcare services – especially by Aboriginal Victorians and other diverse or marginalised communities.

Better access

Our vision is about:

- care always being there when people need it
- more access to care in the home and community
- people being connected to the full range of care and support they need
- fair access to care.

Why it is important

Victoria has a strong health system that works well for most people, but some people face barriers to the care they need. This can be due to waiting times, stigma, discrimination, or people not knowing how or where to get the care they need. For some Victorians in rural and regional areas, it can be due to long distances that separate them from some kinds of care.

Waiting too long for necessary healthcare services can cause people's health and quality of life to deteriorate, and directly impacts on care outcomes.

Where we will focus

Plan and invest

To improve access in the long term, the government will match investment with projected needs. Planning for the future through a Statewide Service and Infrastructure Plan will take into account the whole system, ensuring all the parts fit together without bottlenecks to deliver person-centred care. Ambulance services will be fast and responsive. Bigger hospitals will give support and expertise to smaller hospitals through formal partnerships. For highly specialised services that cannot be located in every community, these partnerships, along with transport options, will get people to the right care quickly and seamlessly, no matter where they live.

Unlock innovation

Access can be improved by using more efficient and safer practices – freeing up beds sooner to treat more people.

Better Care Victoria will provide support and expertise to spread proven best practices throughout Victoria's hospitals. It will also help find new ways for different kinds of services to work together, so that patients can move through the system more quickly.

Provide easier access

In the future, more people will get care in community settings and their own homes. Telehealth, and later virtual reality, remote sensors and monitoring, will be available across the state, linking people to the full array of health professionals, regardless of where they live.

These new models of remote care will make it easier for older people, people with a disability, young families and people in remote areas to get the care they need. As well as being more convenient, care outside the home or nearby can be more cost effective, freeing up hospitals to care for the most unwell patients sooner.



Ensure fair access

Access to care should be driven by need, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, social circumstance, location, ethnicity or cultural background, or mental health.

The government will remove cultural and physical barriers to equal access by measuring gaps in access to care, supporting healthcare providers to understand and overcome them, and holding them accountable for doing so. Both the government and healthcare services will ask affected groups what the barriers are and work with them to find the best ways to remove them.

Policies, planning and training can make a big difference, but we will also develop a workforce that truly reflects the diversity of our community, so that all Victorians feel welcomed and understood when they visit a healthcare service.

Measure progress

We will measure progress by:

- increasing the delivery of care in the home and community
- reducing the number of people waiting longer than recommended for elective surgery, emergency department treatment, ambulance services, palliative care and reducing outpatient waiting times
- improving access to family cancer centres for people at high risk
- reducing access gaps for people experiencing disadvantage such as Aboriginal people, people who identify as LGBTI or culturally and linguistically diverse, people from refugee backgrounds or people with a disability
- developing new measures that better reflect people's experience of care, such as wait times from GP diagnosis to surgery.

Better care

Our vision is about:

- **targeting zero avoidable harm in our health system**
- **healthcare that focuses on outcomes**
- **people being active partners in care**
- **care fitting together around people's needs.**

Why it is important

Victorians should receive safe and effective care every time, no matter what their condition, where they are treated, or who they are.

Healthcare needs to be based on the best evidence about what works, with improvement and innovation embedded into day-to-day service delivery. Healthcare also has to be integrated to work well.

A growing number of people need to use a range of different types of care. If that care fails to link up properly, it can be frustrating and time-consuming for patients. Worse, it can put their health at risk through missed referrals, gaps in information or conflicting advice.

People want to be part of decisions about their care and they need the right information to help them manage their health. Sharing decisions and information is part of respectful, good-quality and effective care.

Where we will focus

Put quality first

Government, providers, clinicians and patients will work together to make sure that quality and safety are the top priority across the health system. The government has a target of zero avoidable harm in our hospitals. All care should follow the best evidence about what works.

To achieve these goals, the government will:

- support strong leadership with good clinical leaders, effective boards and rigorous oversight including through Safer Care Victoria
- collect better data about patient outcomes and experiences and feed it back across the system to improve care
- share excellence so that where one healthcare service does something well, others can follow suit.

Join up care

Healthcare is about a person, not a disease. All of a person's health problems should be taken into account as a standard part of care. When necessary, they will be linked to physical health services, mental health services, or other services and support they need, such as services to help with housing, social connection or safety from violence.

For people living with chronic disease, everyone involved in their healthcare will work together to provide a coordinated response. Providers will share funding, information and expertise to achieve the best results. Joining up care and helping people to navigate the system will make care easier and more effective, ultimately leading to better health and fewer hospital visits.



Partner with patients

By 2040, we will have completed the transition to a system that empowers people, and places them, their families and carers at the centre of decision making.

People will have the information and support they need to take an active role. That includes access to their health records, and clear information about their health and the choices they can make about their care. Their healthcare team will actively help them to make those choices, listening to them and giving them more control.

The government and healthcare services will harness the perspective and experience of patients, giving them real input into how healthcare services are designed, and how the health system works as a whole. People's experiences will play a central role in how the health system is managed, as a measure of performance and a spur for improvement.

Strengthen the workforce

Our health system is only as strong as the people who work in it. Our health workforce is engaged and passionate. It should be valued for its contribution and encouraged to embrace new opportunities to deliver the best possible care in safe and supportive workplaces.

Working with healthcare providers and professional organisations, the government will help ensure that the health workforce can continually learn and develop their skills, including working together across disciplines and organisations, and leading improvement across the system.

There will be more diversity and flexibility in the workplace, freeing people to use all their skills and abilities. At the same time, healthcare organisations and the government will learn from the workforce, harnessing their experience and insights to improve models of care, systems and policy.

Embed evidence

Victoria is a leader in health and medical research. In partnership with clinicians, service providers and researchers, the government will drive innovation in areas of strength – such as biomedical science – and extend efforts in other areas that are crucial for our vision for the future health system.

Genomics, personalised medicine and immunology will be a focus. So will research on service models, prevention, integrated care for chronic disease, and how to address the social determinants of health. Closer collaboration between healthcare providers and researchers will ensure that new discoveries are translated quickly into practice.

Ensure equal care

The government is responsible for making sure that all Victorians get the same high quality of healthcare, especially Victorians who are vulnerable, suffer disadvantage or are at



risk of discrimination. We will support healthcare services to understand the needs and preferences of their patients, and to provide culturally responsive and welcoming care to everyone regardless of their culture, background, language or sexual or gender identity.

Variation in the care that different groups receive will be monitored closely to make sure that no aspect of care is influenced by prejudice or discrimination, including the safety, quality and experience of care.

Measure progress

We will measure progress by:

- moving towards zero avoidable harm
- improving cancer survival rates (one-year and five-year rates)
- reducing unexplained variations in the care people receive
- improving patient-reported experiences and outcomes of care
- improving equity in people's experience of care delivery, including satisfaction
- reducing bullying, assault and inappropriate behaviour in public healthcare services.



**Better health
better access
better care**

