

HEALTH

ACT Labor knows that every member of our community depends on our public health system and that's why we have made health our priority over the past 4 years. ACT Labor has invested heavily in health in order to build up a strong, well resourced and responsive public health system – both in our hospitals and in the community.

Since coming to government ACT Labor has invested record levels of funding into the health system with the annual health budget now at \$889 million every year - an 88% increase.

This investment has funded essential services and employed an additional 193 doctors, 295 nurses and 154 allied health professionals to work across the public health system.

ACT Labor is committed to building on the work already done.

There is no doubt that our health system faces challenges ahead. These include increasing demand for services, international and national workforce shortages right across the health professions and increasing pressure at emergency departments.

A new approach is required if we are to meet the challenges of the future. This new approach involves new infrastructure, new services, new technology, investment in our existing workforce and the creation of new roles within that workforce.

Health systems right across the world are changing – there is growing recognition that there must be greater emphasis on early intervention and prevention, whilst ensuring our acute care system is maintained and upgraded to meet future challenges.

Here in Canberra we have a unique opportunity – a chance to build the health system we need for the future. As a government we have taken some tough decisions to ensure that we are able to meet the health costs that our community will demand in the future.

As we prepare for Canberra's Centenary in 2013 and beyond, we know that we need to change the way we provide healthcare if we are going to be able to meet our community's health care needs.

ACT Labor understands the challenges facing our health system. We have done the work, analyzed the data, spoken to the experts, listened to the community and we have prepared a plan for the future.

Jon Stanhope
Chief Minister

Katy Gallagher
Deputy Chief Minister and
Minister for Health

A strong record of investment in Health

Our Hospitals

- Employed an additional 193 doctors, 295 nurses and 154 allied health professionals over the last five years
- Delivered an additional 172 fully staffed public hospital beds since 2001
- Delivered year on year record elective surgery with another 9,600 elective surgery procedures this year
- Increased the number of nurses in The Canberra Hospital emergency department by 14% over two years to 100 full time equivalent positions.
- Added 3 new emergency department doctors to the department
- Provided almost \$1.4 million annually to establish 17 inpatient observation unit beds adjacent to emergency departments to manage people who need a lower level of medical attention than is provided in the acute ED area
- Established the \$2.9 million 16-bed Medical Assessment and Planning Unit to provide for a quick transfer of patients with more complex conditions arriving at the ED to a specialist unit better able to manage their care
- Increased the Intensive Care Unit capacity at The Canberra Hospital by 30%
- Built a new \$30 million radiation oncology centre at The Canberra Hospital including the commissioning of a third linear accelerator machine
- Built a new 60 bed sub-acute facility at Calvary Hospital with a 20 bed psycho geriatric facility at a cost of \$9.75m
- Commissioned a tenth operating theatre at The Canberra Hospital with extended operating times
- Established a child friendly area within the Emergency Department at The Canberra Hospital
- Established a new complex eye surgery service and a head and neck trauma service, saving ACT residents from having to travel interstate for these services
- Allocated \$300 million to commence the complete rebuild of our health system including:
 - \$90m for a Women's and Children's Hospital;
 - \$37.6m for a suite of mental health facilities at The Canberra Hospital, including a 40 bed Adult Acute Inpatient Unit, a 15 bed Secure Adult Unit, a 5 bed Mental Health Assessment Unit, and the design of a Young Person's Unit;
 - \$18m for a Gungahlin Community Health Centre;
 - \$9.4m for a 16 bed Intensive Care and High Dependency Unit at Calvary Hospital;
 - \$5.7m for digital mammography;
 - \$5.5m for a Neurosurgery Suite integrated with state-of-the-art imaging systems;
 - \$5m for redevelopment of Community Health Centres;

- \$4.1m for a 16 bed Surgical Assessment and Planning Unit;
- \$2.4m for 24 additional beds at The Canberra Hospital; and
- \$1.3m for a skills development centre.

Community Health and Early Intervention

- Invested an additional \$1.7 million in public dental health services providing an extra 415 procedures a year and slashing our waiting lists for non-urgent work by 50%
- Invested \$2m over 4 years for Combating Childhood Obesity to support physical activity projects focusing on children and families
- Invested \$2 million over 4 years to Anglicare's Junction Youth Health services in Tuggeranong and Gungahlin to employ two Youth Health Nurses and two Youth Health Workers to improve the health and well-being of young people in these areas
- Funded a marketing campaign to attract general practitioners to Canberra
- Invested \$2.1 million over four years to develop the innovative IMPACT Program (Integrated Multi-agencies for Parents and Children Together) that aims to improve responses to vulnerable families
- Driven groundbreaking tobacco reform, including prohibiting smoking in enclosed places and restricting the sale and display of tobacco. These reforms have also banned fruit flavoured cigarettes, split packs and entitlements to customer loyalty rewards
- Invested in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health by providing \$1.1 million per year to the Winnunga Nimmityjah health facility and worked with the local community on the design of a rehabilitation program and facility
- Introduced the *Go for 2&5* fruit and vegetable campaign to reinforce the idea of healthy eating, and *Find Thirty. It's not a big exercise* to encourage physical activity
- Ensured ACT immunisation rates continue to exceed the national benchmark of 90%

Investing in our Health Professionals

- Funded the \$12.1 million ANU Medical School at The Canberra Hospital which is now graduating 80 doctors a year for our community
- Provided \$1.75 million for the Calvary Hospital Campus of the ANU Medical School
- Funded the \$10 million Allied Health building at the University of Canberra which is now graduating students in the areas of Nutrition and Dietetics, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy and Clinical Psychology. Approximately 150 students have already graduated or will graduate in 2008 benefiting from these new facilities
- Increased the number of clinical placements for student enrolled nurses by 50% with a pilot program in Renal Services at The Canberra Hospital
- Worked with the ACT Nursing and Midwifery Board to develop a refresher course for enrolled nurses, and provided \$300,000 in scholarships annually to nurses and midwives, as well as \$20,000 per year in grants
- Invested in new Nurse Practitioner positions across the health system to provide innovative new models of care

Preparing for the Future

The ACT health system needs long term and achievable solutions to address the demand for health services that we know will reach a peak here in 2016-2018. As a community we have a wonderful opportunity to prepare for this surge in demand and build the system we need to secure our health future.

ACT Labor understands that in order to create a system for the future we will need to build one that is ready for the future. We need to build state-of-the-art facilities, we need new and expanded services that target the health needs of our local community, we need to adopt new technologies, and we need to support our existing workforce and grow the health workforce at the same time.

In 2008 we have the unique opportunity to fund and build a new health system for Canberra. This plan is more than just buildings – it's about more services, more beds, more staff and new ways of providing care.

Over the next four years ACT Labor will grow the recurrent health budget by at least 6% every year. We have already begun this work and we will continue this funding increase every year. Under this plan the health budget will exceed \$1 billion by 2011-2012.

Responsible economic planning has enabled ACT Labor to plan for the future. We understand that health costs are going to increase rapidly every year and we have made provision every year to meet those costs.

ACT Labor will allocate almost \$250 million in new and expanded health services over the next 4 years.

This extra investment will increase hospital capacity; improve cancer care and support for our health workforce; add extra community health services; increase funding for chronic disease management and early intervention and prevention programs; and add extra services to meet the needs of ageing Canberrans.

ACT Labor will commit an extra \$750 million in capital funding - \$150 million every year – to fund the health infrastructure plan and build the health system of the future for the Canberra community – ready for the future.

This is our commitment to the people of Canberra.

Labor's health infrastructure plan

ACT Labor has already invested \$300 million to kick off the complete overhaul of our public health facilities as part of a 10 year \$1 billion program.

ACT Labor will:

- **Commit \$150 million every year over the next 5 years to deliver the project on time.**
- **\$120 million to provide capacity for over 400 additional beds** for our hospital system across general hospital, cancer and aged care services at both our public hospitals
- **\$108 million to rebuild the Belconnen and Phillip community health centres and refurbish the City and Dickson centres** to ensure that they are ready to provide new types of care into the future
- **\$80 million to build 11 operating theatres and three endoscopy suites** to manage the increasing demand for emergency and elective surgery
- **\$25 million to build 2 new Emergency Departments** at both public hospitals doubling the capacity of our current ED facilities through 55 extra treatment spaces
- **\$14.2 million to build a cancer centre of excellence** to provide the people of the region with more coordinated care
- **\$20 million for a new skills development centre** to provide new simulated training and education for clinical and cross-profession learning, ensuring that the people of the ACT will continue to be able to access highly qualified clinical professionals
- **\$90 million to invest in smarter health technology** over the next four years to respond to patients' needs – a quicker, more efficient and safer health system for all Canberrans, which will include:
 - **\$47 million to establish a safe and secure e-health** record for every Canberran that will provide for better coordinated care, as well as providing the people of the ACT with greater control over their health care needs and services
 - **\$43 million to commission smart health technologies** that enable distance monitoring of patient conditions, and the capacity for electronic medication management. These new, safe systems will also enable clinicians to order tests and call up results remotely

More beds, new services, quicker access to care, smarter technology

ACT Labor understands that our health system is not just buildings and machines. We will invest in more doctors, more nurses and more allied health professionals with a further \$103 million in recurrent funds totalling \$247 million over the next four years, to meet the growth in demand for services and to provide better ways of providing health care to the people of the ACT.

The services outlined will add another 130 nurses, 40 new doctor positions and 40 additional allied health positions to our public health system over the next four years.

Over the last two years, demand for hospital services has increased by 15%. Our hospitals have provided record levels of access to elective surgery and our emergency departments are managing more complex medical conditions than ever before.

\$77.6 million for 58 more hospital beds, expansion of hospital in the home, 3 new operating theatres and provision of new services

ACT Labor will provide \$77.6 million over the next four years to add 58 more hospital beds to our hospital system, on top of the 172 already funded and staffed. This increase will assist us in keeping ahead of the demand for additional inpatient services, as well as creating new services to take pressures off our hospitals.

ACT Labor will increase our general hospital bed capacity by 30 more beds to keep up with demand for inpatient services.

ACT Labor will build and staff a new 16 bed Surgical Assessment and Planning Unit which will provide quicker access to assessment and treatment services for major emergency surgical patients.

We will fund and staff 12 new intensive care unit beds in the ACT, with eight beds at The Canberra Hospital and four beds at Calvary as part of the critical care unit overhaul.

We will fund the equivalent of 40 new beds through the expansion of the Hospital in the Home program. This will enable the provision of more acute services within people's homes.

ACT Labor will establish 3 new "walk-in centres" – with the first one opening in 2010 - to fill the gap in the current provision of health care services in the ACT, and reduce pressures on our emergency departments and GP services. The walk-in centres will provide care for people with minor, one-off illnesses and injuries.

The services will be developed in consultation with emergency department doctors, GPs and the public. These services are not a substitute for GP or emergency services, but rather provide an additional option for those with less serious needs, providing quicker access to medical attention while also taking pressure off our busy hospitals and GP practices.

These new and expanded services will require 130 additional nurses, 43 doctors and 40 allied health professionals.

\$13.5 million to care for our smallest babies

ACT Labor will add over \$13.5 million to the health budget to expand services in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, including the establishment of video streaming for parents and clinicians, and expanding the capacity of the Centre for Newborn Care at The Canberra Hospital (comprising our neonatal intensive care and special care nursery) from 24 cots to 30 cots over the forward estimates – adding at least 15 new specialist nurses and another three to four doctors.

\$11.6 million for more doctors and nurses for our dedicated Women's and Children's Hospital

ACT Labor will allocate \$11.6 million to commission the new Women and Children's hospital which will collocate all women's health, obstetric, neonatal and children's services in a single facility and, for the first time in Canberra's history, provide a dedicated Women's and Children's hospital for the region.

This funding will ensure that the new hospital has the necessary staffing to provide the full level of services to the community with 30 additional full time staff when the hospital opens in 2012.

\$32.1 million to staff and run a state-of-the-art neurosurgery suite, 3 more operating rooms to increase access to surgery

ACT Labor will provide an extra \$32.1 million over the next four years to continue to ensure record levels of elective surgery are performed every year.

We will continue to focus on meeting the demand for emergency surgery by building and staffing two new operating theatres at The Canberra Hospital and another one at Calvary Public Hospital – increasing our operating theatre capacity by over 20%.

By 2011 we will establish a new, specialised \$10.5 million neurosurgery operating theatre that will provide a state-of-the-art facility for brain and back surgery in the ACT.

\$35.6 million to care for our older citizens

ACT Labor will add \$10.3 million over the next four years to meet the growth in demand for acute, rehabilitation and community based services for older Canberrans, ensuring access to the best possible services in the least invasive environment.

The new sub and non acute service established by the Government in 2007 filled a major gap in the provision of services for older people by providing specialised care for people who no longer need acute hospital care, but cannot yet manage their own care at home. We will provide for the further development of this service while also continuing to build community and hospital capacity for aged care and rehabilitation services.

ACT Labor will increase the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program by \$25 million over four years to support increased care in the community and maximise the health and social outcomes for older Canberrans, enabling them to receive additional support to stay at home.

ACT Labor understands that older people want to receive the care they need within their home if at all possible. Our expansion of the HACC program will ensure that older people can continue to lead fulfilling and independent lives within our communities.

\$19.2 million to address increasing demands for cancer treatment

ACT Labor will provide \$10.3 million over four years to ensure that we are able to deliver cancer treatment and services as they are needed. This funding will enable the Capital Region Cancer Service to continue to meet demand for medical oncology, radiation oncology, and haematology and immunology services.

ACT Labor will provide ACT women with access to the next generation in breast screening with the commissioning of digital mammography equipment to replace the current “film-screen” mammography system at a cost of \$6.8 million over four years. Digital mammography is less invasive and can detect smaller cancer cells, increasing the potential of finding and treating cancers earlier.

For the first time in the ACT, ACT Labor will provide resourcing for a public diagnostic mammography service at a cost of \$2 million over four years. This new service will provide women who have had a positive breast cancer test, or have breast cancer symptoms, with access to a public service as they are unable to access Breastscreen ACT, which is a screening service for women without breast cancer.

\$13.6 million to staff the brand new community health centre at Gungahlin

ACT Labor will provide \$13.6 million over the next four years to fund the staff and other costs of running the new Gungahlin Health Centre. Gungahlin is the fastest growing area and this new health centre will provide the services currently available at health centres across the ACT.

In addition, the new facility will also provide higher level primary care services enabling more people to get health services nearer to where they live. This new service model will be rolled out across all community health centres in the ACT.

\$2 million to support e-health and smart technology initiatives

ACT Labor will also provide an additional \$2 million per year from 2012-13 to fund the additional expertise necessary to successfully implement a suite of new e-health initiatives. These include the establishment of an e-health record and the development of a range of technologies that will give people greater confidence to better manage their own health needs. These initiatives will also enable people to be treated in the least invasive environment possible for their condition.

\$20 million to support our health workforce

ACT Labor will spend an additional \$20 million over the next four years to provide a skilled, balanced and modernised health workforce, including:

- Supporting and growing our GP workforce (\$12m over four years)
- Working with our GPs and the ANU Medical School to grow the number of GPs providing care in our community, through:
 - \$30,000 scholarships to keep ANU Medical School Graduates working in Canberra. We will provide 5 Canberra region GP scholarships for Year 3 and 4 ANU Medical School students (all up 10 each year) and graduates who commit to undertake training and return to work in the region (\$1.25 million over four years)
 - \$300 per day GP teaching payments. We will support Canberra's busy and hard-working GPs in the provision of quality teaching and training opportunities for GP trainees from the ANU Medical School through funding support grants for GP practices, and teaching incentive payments (\$3.5 million over four years)
 - Establish the ACT GP Development Fund. The GP Development fund will provide bi-annual grants of \$1million per annum for GP practices who commit to increasing the numbers of GPs working in the ACT. This program will provide one-off payments to GP practices for initiatives such as attracting staff, enhancing practices and the establishment of new services. These grants will be flexible, based on the type and nature of the ideas proposed by the GPs – the criteria for application will be to deliver an increase in the numbers of GPs working in Canberra (\$4 million over four years)
 - Locum Services for residents of Aged Care Facilities. ACT Labor will provide an “in-hours” locum medical service to complement the current out of hours, Canberra Afterhours Locum Medical Service. GPs are fully occupied during business hours, making it difficult to provide home visits or services for people in residential aged care facilities. This new service will provide services for elderly Canberrans and will ensure that they get access to services where they live. (\$1.94 million over four years)
 - GP Placement Services. We will establish a GP placements program, which provides rotation through GP clinics for 4 junior medical doctors, giving new GPs a range of experiences across our community and funding for additional GP vocational training activity in the ACT (\$1.35 million over four years)

\$8.2 million to expand the roles of allied health professionals, doctors, nurses and assistants

The demand for health services continues to grow strongly, and will keep growing given the ageing of the population. It is essential that we grow our health workforce to keep in front of the demand for services. However, we also need to look at new ways to provide safe, high quality health services if we are to meet community needs throughout the next decade and beyond.

The establishment of new roles, such as nurse practitioners and extended scope allied health officers will provide new types of qualified health professionals that are able to manage specific conditions, with support from doctors and other clinicians. This will reduce pressures on our doctors and provide more timely and effective care for the community.

ACT Labor will fund several new important initiatives over the next four years including:

- Establishment of 15 new health professional support roles in medicine, nursing, midwifery and allied health. These positions will provide additional support to our highly qualified workforce, increasing the flexibility of our clinical staff and providing more timely and appropriate care for the community (\$3.6million over four years).
- Funding of 2 new 'extended scope' physiotherapy positions (in the emergency department "fast track" area and within the orthopaedic surgery unit) to complement the existing workforce and improve access times to care (\$900,000 over four years)
- Establishment of 9 clinical training and development roles for enrolled nurses (4 positions) and allied health professionals (5 positions), to support clinical training and supervision and to set the foundation for extending the scope of practice for these health professionals to increase the flexibility and responsiveness of the ACT public health workforce (\$2.3 million over four years)
- Support for the development of a qualified health workforce in developing countries and assisting in the provision of additional clinical support to ACT health services by providing training and development opportunities for nurses from a number of nations. This program will provide extra nurses for the ACT while providing these nurses with additional qualifications which will greatly assist their communities on their return (\$600,000 over four years)
- Provision of additional scholarships in nursing and midwifery to encourage people to enter these professions. We will double the number of scholarships from 90 to 180 (\$700,000 over four years)

\$10.3 million to support people living with chronic disease

Chronic diseases are predicted to make up 80% of the total burden of illness for Australians by 2020. It is estimated that approximately 3% of the population have one or more chronic diseases and are at high to very high risk of requiring high-level health care.

ACT Labor will allocate \$10.3 million over the next four years to ensure that people with chronic diseases get access to services that enable better management of their condition, better health outcomes and reduce demand for more acute services for this population group.

We recognise that the most important person in the management of chronic disease is the person suffering from the condition themselves. These initiatives ensure that patient is at the centre of treatment and management plans, giving them the knowledge, confidence and expert support to live as healthy a life as possible. This package includes:

- **\$3.2 million for telephone and web-based coaching**
Encouraging self-care for persons at risk of chronic disease by providing regular contact with patients with advice and support. Registered nurses, working with world best-practice protocols for a range of chronic care needs, will discuss people's concerns about their care, provide advice and suggest additional prevention and treatment options.
- **\$4 million for improved case management and care coordination for patients with complex chronic health needs**
Patients with complex chronic care needs can find it difficult to manage the number of services and treatments necessary to maximise their health outcomes. This new program will link up with GPs to provide people with comprehensive care coordination and case management that improves health outcomes and reduces the onerous nature of many of treatments that people with complex needs have to deal with.
- **\$800,000 to establish a patient care register**
The establishment of a patient care register will provide people who have chronic health conditions with more control over their treatment, and encourage self-care, by giving them better and more coordinated information about their care needs. The register (where clients agree) also provides health professionals with a central and structured picture of the treatment and care needs of their clients, including information from the full range of services and professionals providing the client with support. This will ensure that the care provided to people with chronic conditions by one professional complements the care being provide by other clinicians.
- **\$2 million for home tele-monitoring**
The establishment of safe tele-monitoring systems, which electronically transmit vital health information to treating doctors, nurses and health professionals in 'real-time'. This will enable more people to have their conditions managed at home and will reduce the need for these patients to travel to hospital unnecessarily.

\$11.6 million to support a healthy future – improving health and well-being and preventing health problems

ACT Labor recognises that the increasing focus of our health resources must be on prevention. We will invest over \$11.6 million over the next four years to increase the focus on health prevention initiatives. With an ageing population, and increasing levels of chronic disease in our community, an increased focus on prevention is essential to ensure a more healthy future for the people of the ACT as well as ensuring a sustainable public health system.

\$4.95 million to focus on targeted prevention

\$4.95 million to continue to focus on reducing smoking among Aboriginal people, to improve healthy practices at work and to raise the awareness of the impacts, symptoms and transmission of Chlamydia. These programs will be developed in consultation with relevant population groups to ensure their success.

\$6 million to keep our children healthy

ACT Labor understands the challenges facing us in relation to the rising numbers of young people who are overweight or obese. The 2008 Chief Health Officer's report indicates that about 17% of our 5 year olds and 24% of our 12 year olds are overweight or obese.

ACT Labor has already invested \$2 million in a Combating Childhood Obesity initiative and we will build on that work through the allocation of a further \$2 million per annum for 3 years.

ACT Labor will commission an early childhood active play and eating well project. The project aims to establish healthy habits in children at a young age in order to avoid excess weight gain during childhood, which can result in the early onset of major acute and chronic conditions.

The project includes:

- Encouragement of 'active play', providing additional options to more passive pastimes such as computer games (including mechanisms for managing screen based entertainment)
- Expansion of initiatives (aimed at children and parents) which seek the adoption of healthy eating habits in young children based around fruit and vegetables
- Establishing water as the 'drink of choice', including information on the health implications of excessive consumption of soft drinks
- Promoting breast feeding for new mothers

\$300,000 for Adolescent and Young Persons Health

ACT Labor understands the special needs of adolescents and young people. We will allocate \$300,000 to undertake a feasibility study for the establishment of a Centre for Adolescent and Young Persons Health.