

Our Health Counts

Improving the health outcomes for people with intellectual disability Guide for Lobbying the Federal Health Minister

Contact the Federal Health Minister:

Either call or email The Federal Health Minister, Hon Greg Hunt

Make sure the phone call or email is courteous and that you include your name and address.

The phone number is
(02) 6277 7220

Use the form on [this link](#) to send the email.

What you might like to say:

You could remind the Minister that:

The issue:

450,000 people in Australia have intellectual disability.

Including their families, two million Australians are impacted.

There are stark and costly health inequalities.

Compared with the general population, people with intellectual disability experience:

- Over twice the rate of avoidable deaths: 38 – 53% avoidable deaths.
- Lower rates of preventative healthcare and illness detection.
- Twice the rate of emergency department and hospital admissions.

Health professionals face challenges communicating with people with intellectual disability, distinguishing health problems from the disability, and diagnosing complex health conditions.

Two key gaps:

- Primary Health Networks (PHNs) are meant to help GPs improve health care for disadvantaged groups. But they lack any substantial focus on people with intellectual disability.
- University medical schools provide an average of 2.6 hours teaching focused on intellectual disability health. The majority of nursing schools provide no teaching on intellectual disability.

What we have sought:

1. A specific funded program in each Primary Health Network to improve the capacity and efficiency of GPs and other primary health services.
2. Curriculum enhancement in medical and nursing schools.
3. A national inquiry to decide next steps.

Projected cost savings from proposed actions include:

- Illness prevention and timely and accurate diagnosis and treatment, resulting in a reduction of hospitalisations of people with chronic or acute conditions.
- Reduced NDIS costs \$100 million a year.

Minister Hunt has listened to us and responded but there is more to do:

Make sure you thank Minister Hunt for the good work he has done on developing the National Roadmap for Improving Health Services for people with intellectual disability.

You might want to also thank him for funding commitments he made in the 2021-22 federal budget. These include:

- \$6.7 million to improve the uptake and effectiveness of GP annual health assessments for people with intellectual disability.
- \$1.4 million for scoping and co-design of a National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health.
- \$4.6 million for development of curriculum on the needs of people with intellectual disability in tertiary education health courses.

These amounts build on the \$6.6 million in last year's budget for the Primary Care Enhancement Program (PCEP). That money has gone to four lead Primary Health Networks who now have programs to enhance GP and other primary health care to people with intellectual disability. CID has also been funded to develop resources for the PCEP.

39 peak bodies and key organisations have endorsed our campaign, including the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists. (There is a full list on CID's website.)

What we are asking for now is for Minister Hunt to commit to the early release and steady implementation of a strong National Roadmap for Improving Health Services for people with intellectual disability.

We would love to know how you go. Please let us know or send us the response you receive from the Federal Minister for Health. Send to advocacy@cid.org.au