

### Health

Timely access to a comprehensive, high quality health care system is a basic human right, and health services should be publicly funded. Governments are responsible for ensuring that all people have access to the resources and opportunities essential for good health. Health service provision should be equitable, socially just and responsive to changing needs. As individual health outcomes are influenced by biological, social, economic and environmental factors, these must be addressed as part of a comprehensive health care system.

The Greens (WA) endorse the World Health Organisation definition of health as the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. We therefore seek a holistic approach to health that includes an emphasis on disease prevention, health promotion and addressing the social and environmental determinants of health.

#### Aims

*The Greens (WA) want:*

- a universal public health care system that ensures access and equity for all Western Australians
- healthcare available to all, free at the point of delivery and funded through progressive general taxation
- essential non-acute needs being met in the community, along with increased an increased emphasis on health promotion, illness prevention and early diagnosis
- full provision of government funded public dental services based on need
- the provision of integrated publicly funded community-based mental health services (see also The Greens (WA) [Mental Health](#) policy)
- all current and future public hospital developments being publicly owned
- effective home-based health care support, especially for the elderly and those with a disability, being fully available to all who require it (see also The Greens (WA) [Seniors](#) and [Disability](#) policies)
- a skilled, well-resourced health workforce who are included in policy development and planning
- effective community participation in all health decision-making, planning and implementation
- all First Nations people to have easy access to affordable and culturally appropriate comprehensive primary health care (see also The Greens (WA) [First Nations Peoples](#) policy)
- planning for increased pressures on the health system due to climate change, economic instability and unexpected new diseases
- research into, and education about, relatively under-recognised diseases/disorders with significant effects on people's lives

#### Measures

*The Greens (WA) will initiate and support legislation and actions that:*

### **Primary Health Care, Allied and Community Health**

- review health priorities and direct funding to priority health areas without duplication or gaps
- ensure the provision of allied health professionals and allied health care centres for communities according to needs, including incentives to encourage the co-location of GPs
- provide greater support for culturally appropriate and responsive health service delivery, such as through Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHO's)
- fund public dental services that cover preventive dental health and emergency dental care, with targeted initiatives for those most at risk
- ensure adequate funding for health care services in rural and regional areas
- ensure that the State Government creates a permanent, well-resourced section of the Health Department to prepare for pandemics, including monitoring outbreaks, stockpiling medical supplies and training for medical staff
- ensure all health services in prisons and correctional settings are delivered by the public system
- recognise the links between health and well-being of First Nations peoples, their special cultural and spiritual connections with the land and water, and generational trauma (see also The Greens (WA) First Nations Peoples policy)
- ensure that high quality therapeutic services are available to anyone who requires them, free of charge

### **Public Hospital Services**

- reduce emergency department and out patient waiting times
- develop new programs to address the needs of patients with complex psycho-social needs who currently use emergency systems as centres of last resort
- improve linkages between hospitals and community-based services, especially in relation to hospital discharge and prevention of avoidable admissions
- increase outpatient services offered through public hospitals, especially in rural areas
- ensure public ownership of all current and future public hospital developments, including the provision of services within those developments

### **Population Health**

- increase the funding for health promotion initiatives and early intervention
- integrate health considerations into all government policy and planning using a partnership model
- establish a Health Impact Assessment process for all major planning and industrial developments to run parallel with the current Environmental Impact Assessment process
- establish partnerships with Local Governments to develop programs that support and encourage the adoption of Healthy Spaces and Places planning guidelines (see also The Greens (WA) Local Government policy)

- increase funding for a variety of structured school, work and community-based physical activity programs, particularly to address specific issues in low income communities (see also The Greens (WA) Education and Physical Activity policies)
- ensure that physical activity and healthy food choices are a recognised part of Occupational Health and Safety policies
- require all food services in hospitals, schools, universities and child care centres to offer healthy food choices
- restrict the sponsorship of sporting bodies by fast food and alcohol companies and provide additional funds to organisations such as Healthway to provide alternative sponsorship opportunities
- implement a comprehensive approach to addressing tobacco, alcohol and other drug use and their related harms (see also The Greens (WA) Alcohol & Other Drugs policy)
- ensure comprehensive programs to address the health impacts of obesity
- ensure ongoing funding and support for HIV prevention informed by evidence based best practice and maintain the strong partnership between the health sector, affected communities, decision makers and researchers
- recognise diseases such as Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS)<sup>1</sup> and other chemical injuries both medically and legally
- recognise that ME/CFS<sup>2</sup> is affecting a significant sector of the community and prioritise research into its diagnosis and treatment
- adequately resource the Department of Health's Environmental Health Division
- provide preventative public health measures that will enhance environmental health quality in Western Australia
- establish a management plan for the health risks posed by climate change (see also The Greens (WA) Climate Change and Energy policies)
- support everyone being registered for organ donation unless they choose to opt out
- substantially improve essential services such as access to safe water, all-weather access, adequate waste disposal and electricity, and fresh nutritious food in remote communities up to the standard expected by the wider community (see also The Greens (WA) Regions policy)
- address self-determination, land rights and economic development as essential prerequisites to improvements in First Nations peoples' health
- prioritise quality public housing that promotes healthy living environments for all residents of public housing, including those living in remote First Nations communities (see also The Greens (WA) Housing policy)
- ensure that remote communities have clean, potable water supplies
- implement a public health program involving allied health, primary health providers and all workplaces to monitor and report on occupational exposure to hazardous materials, diseases and incidents (see also The Greens (WA) Workplace Relations policy)
- provide funding so that all gender affirming medical procedures are free of charge and easy to access (see also The Greens (WA) Gender Identity policy)
- ensure permanent medical intervention for the purposes of assigning gender for people born with an intersex<sup>3</sup> condition, is made only when they are able to make the decision freely for themselves

## **Parent and Child Health**

- ensure substantially quicker access and improved health care provision for young children, recognising that meeting those needs earlier will have a flow on effect for the future (see also The Greens (WA) Children policy)
- increase funding for primary maternal health care with the aim of reducing interventions in labour, including induction, instrumental and Caesarean deliveries and ensure interventions in labour are in line with best international evidence and practice (see also The Greens (WA) Women policy)
- increase midwife-based birthing services and services focused on the needs of the pregnant parent, and improve continuity of culturally secure maternity care in all public hospitals
- increase breastfeeding programs based on the parent's needs and experiences, free from the influence of commercial interests
- encourage flexible work policies that enable parents to breastfeed
- protect the rights of people that are/can get pregnant to access the ongoing provision of medical services for the prevention and termination of pregnancy
- increase post-natal services, especially for parents experiencing post-natal mental health issues
- provide programs in hospitals and the community for birthing and parenting designed for people at risk due to age, medical, social and other circumstances
- increase funding for education and programs that promote the benefits of mass immunisation
- increase awareness for, and training around, transgender<sup>4</sup> and non-binary people with the ability to become pregnant, ensuring that they are not excluded from pregnancy, contraceptive and post-partum health care services

## **Workforce Development and Community Participation**

- increase resources for the training of First Nations health professionals
- review and implement effective measures to attract health professionals to rural and remote areas, including the provision of government housing
- provide improved career structure and conditions to retain nurses, midwives, doctors and allied health professionals in the public health system
- invest in comprehensive public oral health workforce development initiatives
- increase the number of TAFE places for dental health technicians
- increase training of Australian graduates, in order to provide more doctors, nurses and health care professionals
- maintain the independence of public research
- require environmental health education and training for the medical profession
- increase funding for those health consumer organisations that assist consumers to participate fully in decisions about health care and health resource allocations
- require trauma informed equity training of all health professionals, so they can work with LGBTQIA+ and First Nations people with respect and provide the care most appropriate to the individual (see also The Greens (WA) Sexuality policy)

*The Greens (WA) will support and advocate for Federal legislation and actions that:*

- improve Medicare and increase public health funding
- ensure that all prisoners have access to Medicare
- redirect existing subsidies of private health insurance to the public health system
- support the increased presence of patient and community representative on the governing councils of local health networks
- develop improved accommodation options for young disabled people so they do not have to be in aged care facilities
- implement accreditation standards for non-traditional practitioners and medicines, and the establishment of registers, professional conduct standards and complaints mechanisms for all therapeutic practitioners
- establish a multi-disciplinary group to investigate alternative therapies for safety and efficacy, noting that this may involve simple surveys of the medical literature, and consider public funding for those therapies that are found to be safe and effective
- make Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), including progesterone, easily and simply accessible, consistent in accessibility, included in the PBS, and available to all who want it

(see also the Australian Greens [Health](#) policy)

## Glossary

1. **Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS)** is a chronic medical condition attributed to low-level chemical exposure to substances such as smoke, pesticides, plastics, synthetic fabrics, scented products, petroleum products, and paint fumes.
2. **Myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS)** is a complex and disabling disease that affects many parts of the body, including the brain and muscles, as well as the digestive, immune and cardiac systems, among others. ME is classified as a neurological disorder by the World Health Organisation.
3. **Intersex** people are born with physical or biological sex characteristics (such as anatomy, reproductive organs, hormonal and/or chromosomal patterns) that are more diverse than stereotypical definitions for male or female bodies.
4. **Transgender** is an umbrella term that describes people whose gender identity or expression does not match the gender they were assigned at birth.
5. **Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT)** is a medical procedure in which drugs are used to block or add hormones, particularly testosterone, oestrogen, and progesterone. This can be used by transgender people as a form of medical transition.

**Health policy ratified by The Greens (WA) in 2020**

**The Greens (WA) health spokesperson is [Alison Xamon MLC](#)**