

Understanding your community's health needs

Understanding your community's needs will help define the target group for your nurse clinic. It will also enable you to decide which health priority group will achieve best use of resources while improving the overall health outcomes for the defined population.

Below are some ideas about how you can find out about your local population health needs.

National and State data sources	
Australian Bureau of Statistics	Provides statistics on a wide range of economic, social, population and environmental matters, covering government, business and the community. The five-yearly Census of Population and Housing is the largest statistical collection undertaken by the ABS www.abs.gov.au
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	Major national agency set up by the Australian Government to provide reliable, regular and relevant information and statistics on Australia's health and welfare www.aihw.gov.au
Australian Research Centre for Population Oral Health	Provides a broad range of dental and oral health statistics for Australia www.arcpoh.adelaide.edu.au
Medicare Australia	Provides Medicare, PBS or PIP statistics for a specified geographical area www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/statistics
National Diabetes Services Scheme	The Australian Diabetes Map is the only national map monitoring the spread of diabetes in Australia. It shows the numbers of people diagnosed with diabetes in all parts of Australia with information on age, gender and type of diabetes www.ndss.com.au
National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre	Provides regional, states and territories statistics on the population, health, finance, housing and activity of Australians aged 50+ www.productiveageing.publichealth.gov.au
Public Health Information Development Unit	Provides information on a broad range of health determinants across the life course. A major emphasis is on the development and publication of small area statistics for monitoring inequality in health and wellbeing. The online atlases, graphics and data sheets enhance access to a wide range of data to support a population health approach to planning activities and service delivery www.publichealth.gov.au

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Local Community data

More information on regional population health needs is available from your local Primary Health Network (PHN) <http://www.health.gov.au/PHN>

Patient population practice data

Using Clinical software systems and clinical audit tools to extract practice data within your organisation provides insights into the local health and wellbeing of your patient population, at a level that is not available from other sources. Having a good understanding of patient data can help primary care organisations engage in preventive care, improve the quality of care, and improve health outcomes. Understanding your patient population data provides an opportunity to assess gaps in care, and to begin discussions within your organisation on how to address them.

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