

1 November 2023

National Rural Health Month highlights healthcare inequities

Today marks the beginning of National Rural Health Month - a month which highlights the inequities that rural, regional and remote Australians face when trying to access the same health care as their urban counterparts.

“This November, we take the opportunity to highlight the myriad of issues faced by rural and remote communities in Australia when trying to access health care, aiming to draw the attention of health sector stakeholders to work towards tangible and sustainable solutions,” said Susi Tegen, Chief Executive of the Alliance.

“We’re keen to voice the healthcare concerns of the 7 million people living in rural and remote Australia throughout this month and highlight the contributions of rural health and medical practitioners. We welcome your stories using #RuralHealthMatters to highlight in our communications channels,” said Ms Tegen.

“Rural areas have fewer health providers across most registered professions although the burden of disease and deaths increase with remoteness. Rural and remote Australians are not second-class citizens and should be able to access equitable health services to their urban counterparts,” Ms Tegen said.

“The Alliance knows from the [Evidence base for additional investment in rural health in Australia](#), released earlier this year, that each person in rural and remote Australia is missing out on nearly \$850 per year of healthcare access. This equates to a total annual rural health underspend of \$6.5billion. This is money that could have allowed Australians living rurally to access health and medical services where they live,” Ms Tegen added.

Rural people experience a triple health disadvantage: poorer circumstances in terms of social determinants of health, a lack of service availability, and higher costs of access and delivery, all resulting in poor health outcomes, despite their sizable social, cultural and economic contribution.

National Rural Health Month coincides the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Alliance. Keep your eye on the Alliance’s social media accounts and the hashtag #RuralHealthMatters throughout November for day-to-day stories of rural Australians trying to access equitable care.

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