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Better eating, better health for rural communities

A pilot program running in 18 locations through June will help Aboriginal people make better food and nutrition choices.

The nutrition pilot is being funded by Rural Health West and delivered through local health service providers, with each provider tailoring the program to suit the needs of the local community.

Rural Health West General Manager, Regional Services Vivienne Duggin said the workshops would be hands-on and help participants to understand the impact of nutrition on the prevention and delay of diabetes and other chronic diseases.

“Many of the workshops will involve a walk-through of the local supermarket where participants will be shown how to select healthy food by visiting the fresh food sections of the shop and how to interpret food labelling on packaged food to make better nutrition decisions.

“This will then be followed up with a group cooking session where they will learn how to cook a healthy, nutritious meal,” Ms Duggin said.

Good nutrition can have a significant impact upon long-term health and can help to delay or prevent health conditions such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

The nutrition pilot is funded through the Australian Government Department of Health’s Medical Outreach Indigenous Chronic Disease Program (MOICDP), which delivers chronic disease care to people living in rural and remote locations.

This is the first time nutrition services have been delivered through the program, with existing dietetic outreach services aimed at people with renal disease.

The local providers supporting the program include:

- Amity Health – Jerramungup, Tambellup, Kojonup and Gnowangerup
- Black Swan Health – Mirrabooka
- Carnarvon Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation – Carnarvon and Mungullah Village
- Diabetes WA – Newman, Roebourne and South Hedland
- Durlacher Dietetics – Shark Bay
- Geraldton Aboriginal Medical Service – Geraldton, Yalgoo, Mount Magnet, Cue and Meekatharra
- WA Country Health Service, Population Health Unit – Broome
- Wongutha Birni Aboriginal Corporation – Kalgoorlie

Rural Health West is the fundholder for MOICDP in Western Australia and has delivered nearly 52,000 occasions of service to people living in rural Western Australia during the 2016-2017 financial year.

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Rural Health West aims to improve access to quality healthcare for rural communities through the provision of a highly skilled, motivated and sustainable medical and allied health workforce. We are a not-for-profit organisation primarily funded through the WA Country Health Service and the Australian Government Department of Health.