

Media Release

Public Health Association of Australia

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Barriers continue to prevent community-controlled health organisations providing care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in prison

New research has revealed that Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) face barriers to deliver to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners what they do best - holistic primary health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Researchers interviewed nineteen staff from four ACCHOs close to prisons across three Australian jurisdictions.

They found that while most ACCHOs deliver post release programs, their capacity to deliver health care to prisoners is limited by security protocols that restrict access to prisoners and funding constraints.

The study results are published today in the Public Health Association of Australia's journal, the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health.

ACCHOs are universally acknowledged as organisations that are run by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, delivering holistic primary health care that's local and community owned.

The authors make several recommendations including reliable funding for ACCHOs and better and consistent access to prisoners.

State governments are encouraged to address prison access issues while the Federal Government is urged to consider changing the rules that prevent ACCHOs from using Medicare to fund work undertaken in the prison setting.

The health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is poorer than that of other Australians. They are over-represented in Australian jails. Due to the unique cultural, social and historical factors, specific solutions to address health issues are required.

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Read the full research paper [here](#).

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