

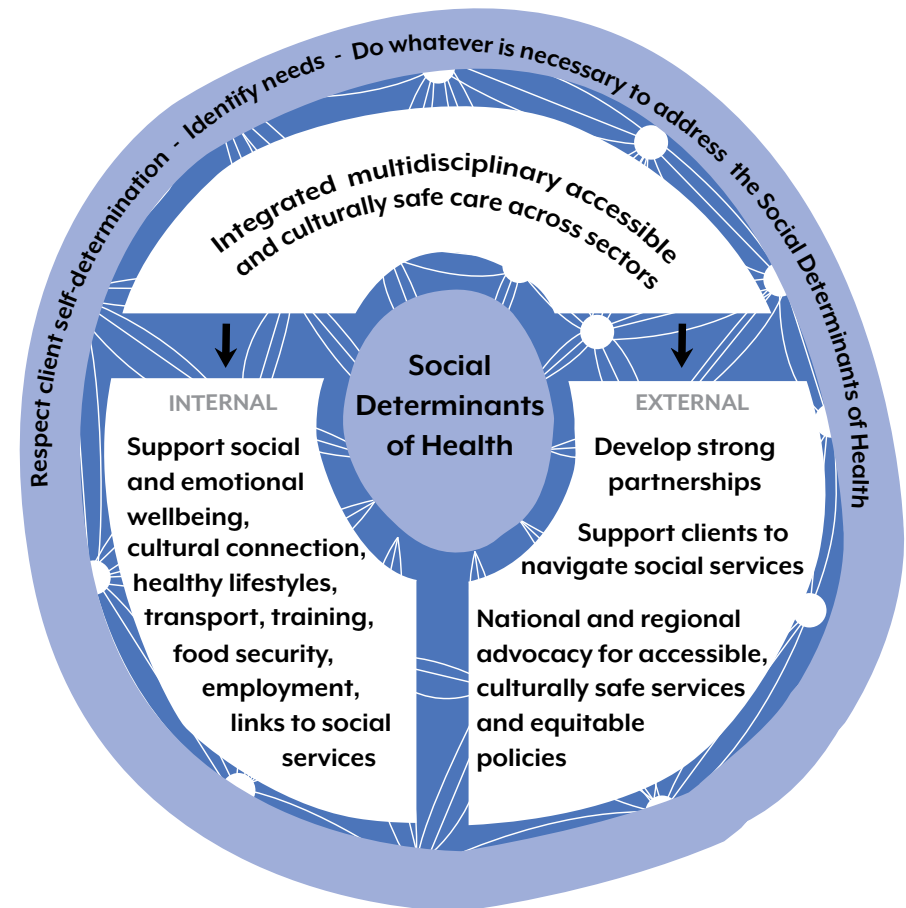
ACCHOs addressing the Social Determinants of Health

Summary

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) work tirelessly to address the social determinants of health impacting their communities. This is done by using cultural ways of working that privilege and respect client self-determination. ACCHOs often act as a one-stop-shop for community through providing seamless, integrated and multidisciplinary care within the service and through partnerships with external services. ACCHO staff support clients to identify their needs before doing 'whatever is necessary' including walking side by side with clients to enable them to access and navigate social services and systems. By providing support to navigate services such as housing, employment and education, ACCHOs increase client engagement and confidence in managing complex circumstances. ACCHOs also promote culturally safe and responsive services through cultural awareness training and mentoring and undertake extensive advocacy efforts to address inequitable features of society. The ACCHO sector faces challenges related to under-resourcing of activities to address the social determinants of health.

ACCHO Approaches to the Social Determinants of Health Model

ACCHOs respect client self-determination and do whatever is necessary to address the social determinants of health through providing and advocating for integrated, multidisciplinary, accessible and culturally safe care within the service and across sectors.



Outcomes

ACCHOs increase access to both health and social services through acting as a one-stop-shop and by doing 'whatever is necessary' to support clients. Positive client outcomes are gained regarding health behaviours, housing security, education and employment.

Enablers

ACCHO approaches to the social determinants of health are enabled by community consultation and engagement, a highly skilled workforce, and respectful partnerships with external organisations.

CONTACT



wardliparingga@sahmri.com



(08) 8128 4000



create.sahmri.org



SAHMRI
South Australian Health & Medical Research Institute



ACCHOs addressing the social determinants of health: challenges and policy implications

The ACCHO sector faces several challenges in delivering programs and services to address the social determinants of health impacting their clients and communities. The table below describes some of these challenges and poses potential policy level responses to strengthen the work of the ACCHO sector.

	Challenge	Potential policy level response
Funding	Insufficient funding is a key challenge of providing a diverse range of services. Some initiatives are implemented with little or no external funding, and short-term funding can result in withdrawal of programs and services that could make a real difference.	Formally acknowledge the extensive amount of work ACCHOs do in addressing the social determinants of health. Funding agreements to provide long-term sustainable funding to enable ACCHOs to continue to develop and implement strategies, programs and initiatives that directly address the social determinants of health. Incorporate flexibility for ACCHOs to consult with their communities and tailor services to local needs. Acknowledge and support ACCHOs as the preferred providers for services such as health, mental health, alcohol and other drugs, aged care, disability and child protection services to build on their experience, knowledge and existing relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
	Administering multiple funding streams.	The frequency and complexity of reporting to be streamlined to reduce the burden on the ACCHO sector. The sector requires additional resourcing for administration including IT, data, reporting and financial management.
Workforce	Non-competitive staff salaries. Challenges with recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce. An environmental health workforce is needed to enable ACCHOs to better promote safe and secure housing for communities.	Funding agreements to adequately resource ACCHO programs so that ACCHO staff can be remunerated fairly and in line with other sectors (e.g. government health services). Provide greater investment in an environmental health workforce and environmental health program agenda so that ACCHOs can support clients in gaining safe and secure living environments.
	Challenges to workforce wellbeing.	Wellbeing initiatives for ACCHO health workforce to be considered when implementing strategic documents such as the <i>'National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework 2016-2023'</i> .
Partnerships	Maintaining relationships with numerous external partners and undertaking extensive advocacy to keep partner services accountable.	Funding agreements to recognise and resource the considerable relationship building efforts and advocacy activities undertaken by the ACCHO sector.

The content within this policy brief was drawn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led research undertaken by the Centre of Research Excellence in Aboriginal Chronic Disease Knowledge Translation and Exchange (CREATE), Wardliparingga Aboriginal Health Equity, South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute.

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