

# Specialist Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Services



Health

## The NSW Government has expanded specialist community based Perinatal and Infant Mental Health services for pregnant women and mothers with complex and severe mental illness.

This expansion is an important part of the NSW Government Mental Health Reform in delivering specialist mental health care in the community.

**Maintaining good mental health before, during and following pregnancy is vital for the health and wellbeing of mothers, their children and families.**

The perinatal period includes the pregnancy and the early parenting period. Specialist Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Services (PIMHS) are for pregnant women and mothers with severe and complex mental illness of infants up to two years of age. These specialist mental health services provide coordinated care for the mother's mental health needs, parenting capacity and parent-infant relationship. PIMHS provide hospital in-reach as well as in-home support to women, their partners and families, reducing separation of mothers from their families wherever possible.

The service includes a Statewide Outreach Perinatal Service for mental health (SwOPS-mh) to ensure that families living in rural and remote districts have access to specialist expertise from a metropolitan hub.

The pilot specialist PIMH service model has been shown to assist mothers with severe and complex mental illness to remain living at home with their families where possible, avoiding unnecessary hospitalisation and reducing time spent in hospital when it is required.

Feedback from child protection services also suggests that support and risk/safety assessments from specialist PIMHS enabled many of their known families to parent safely, thereby reducing the need for entry into out-of-home care.

**Enhancement funds have provided additional services for 200 women, bringing the total number of women accessing the service to 900 annually.**

Additional capacity was provided in areas of high demand including the Royal Women's Hospital at Randwick, Westmead Hospital and the Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network.

To learn more about mental health care reform in NSW visit

[www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/reform](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/reform)

