

First teen mental health beds to open

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Canberra's first adolescent mental health unit will open next year at a new private hospital.

The Deakin Clinic would house up to 52 mental health beds and grow to up to 80 beds over the short to medium term.



An artist's impression of The Deakin Clinic.

It will be co-located with Deakin's Calvary John James Memorial Hospital and include an adolescent unit with about 14 beds.

Investment partners Barwon and Healthe Care Australia said they had identified strong "pent up" demand for the clinic in Canberra. There is currently no adolescent mental health ward - public or private - in Canberra, with some young people forced to go interstate to get treatment.

Children up to 16 who present with acute mental health issues at Canberra Hospital can be admitted to the paediatric ward for treatment. Teenagers aged 16 to 18 sometimes receive treatment at the adult mental health unit at Canberra Hospital, but have to go interstate for more intensive or long term treatment.

A public adolescent mental health ward will not be open until about 2022 when the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children expansion is due to be completed.

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate approval for The Deakin Clinic is underway, with construction to commence in the coming months. It is expected to be open by the middle of next year. The Deakin Clinic will deliver inpatient,

day group program and outpatient adult mental health services for high prevalence mood disorders and trauma recovery services.

It will have dedicated private mental health services for adolescents. This includes an inpatient unit for adolescents; evidence-based day patient programs facilitated by a multidisciplinary team; and outpatient appointments with psychiatrists.

Health Care chief executive officer and managing director, Steve Atkins, said the service had been carefully considered in close consultation with industry representatives and clinicians from the public and private sector.

The service would allow people to stay close to their family and friends while getting treatment, he said.

Mr Atkins said Canberrans were currently travelling interstate to access Health Care's similar private mental health services in Sydney and Illawarra.

"Our local consultation with clinicians to date suggests strong support for, and demand around adolescent and young adult, general adult mental health and trauma support services," he said.