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Aboriginal ante/post-natal service wins national primary health award

An innovative ante/post-natal service for young Aboriginal women in Western Australia has won the Team Excellence Award at the 2013 HESTA Primary Health Care Awards.

The service, called Moort Boodjari Mia (MBM), is run by the North Metropolitan Health Service (NMHS). It assists Aboriginal women under 20 years of age with their pregnancy and parenting issues.

The awards recognise the dedication and professionalism of those working in primary health care, including physiotherapists, dentists, pharmacists, therapists, GPs, rehabilitation professionals, health educators and medical practice managers.

MBM representative, Alison Gibson said the service focussed on providing ante/post natal assistance to young Aboriginal women, but also worked with their partners, grandparents and other significant people in their lives.

"MBM's multi-disciplinary team works together to deliver comprehensive patient care which includes a mixture of home visits, clinic visits and transport to hospital appointments," she said.

"The service has a unique complement of staff, with each case managed by a midwife, Aboriginal Health Officer and Aboriginal Liaison Grandmother. Each team member brings valuable skills and knowledge that directly benefit the client, her baby and other family members.

"The program has been successful in reducing incidences of smoking and drinking alcohol during pregnancy, and increasing the average birth weight to a healthy 3.1 kilograms.

"Our staff understand the differing needs and culturally appropriate ways of working with the Aboriginal community and continually work on developing a service that meets these specific needs.

"We also work with and share our knowledge with other services to help improve health outcomes for the broader Aboriginal community."

HESTA CEO, Anne-Marie Corboy, congratulated the winners of each category.

"The judges received nominations from around the country and had a difficult decision choosing 13 outstanding finalists. The winners are a credit to their organisations and are all contributing to improved community health outcomes, often in areas of high need," Ms Corboy said.

The winners of the 2013 HESTA Primary Health Care Awards were announced at an awards dinner in Melbourne on 6 June.

Ms Gibson received a \$10,000 development grant — courtesy of long-term HESTA awards sponsor ME Bank. The Young Leader and the Individual Distinction Award winners each accepted a \$5,000 ME Bank *EveryDay* Transaction Account and a \$5,000 education grant.

HESTA is the leading super fund for health and community services, with more than 750,000 members and \$22 billion in assets. More people in health and community services choose HESTA for their super.

To learn more about the awards visit hestaawards.com.au

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