

Ear Health Coordination in the Northern Territory – improving ear health outcomes in primary care

CATHARINE KENT AND RUBY BETHUNE (SHE/HER)- EAR HEALTH COORDINATORS



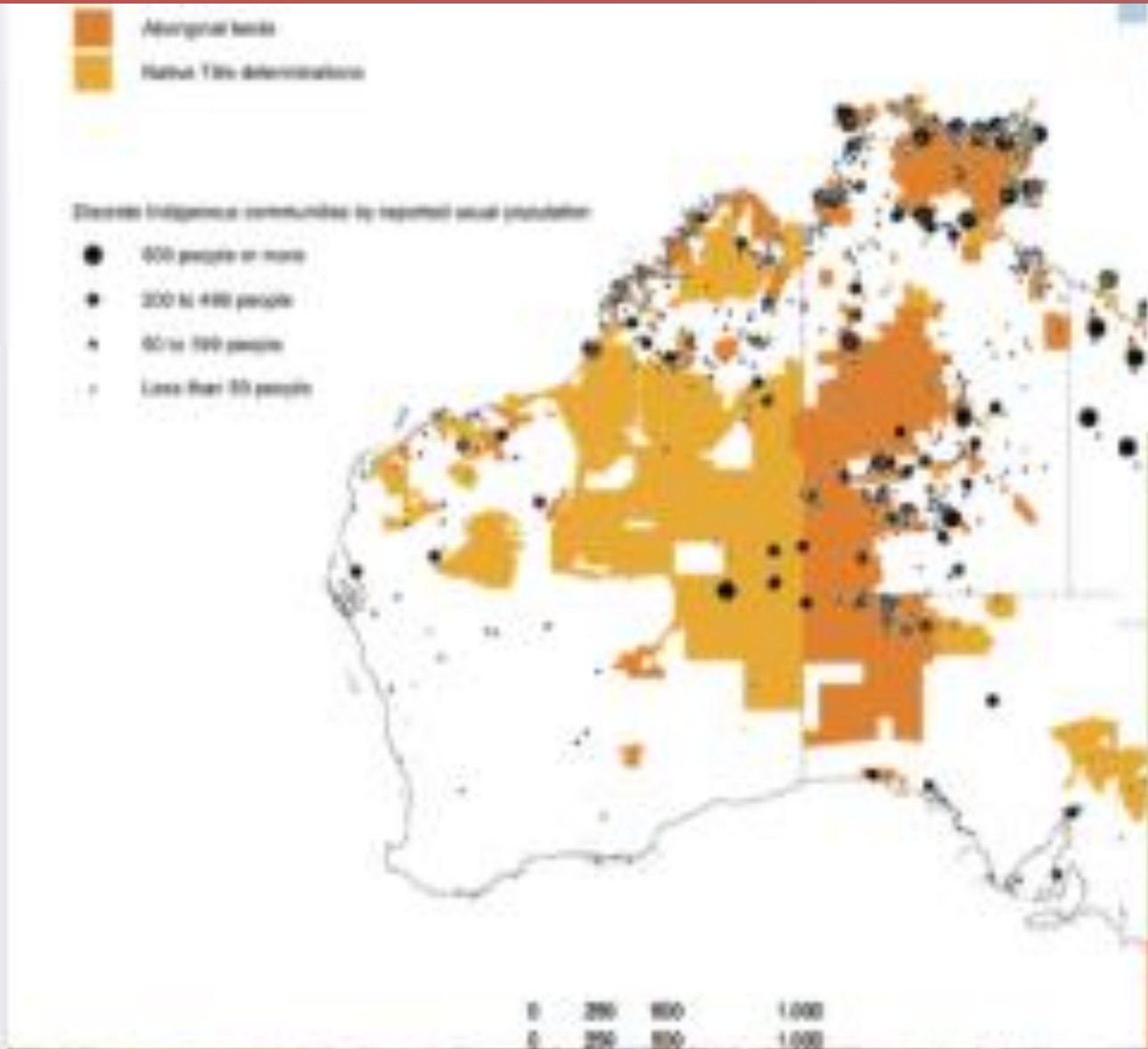
Aboriginal Medical Services
Alliance Northern Territory

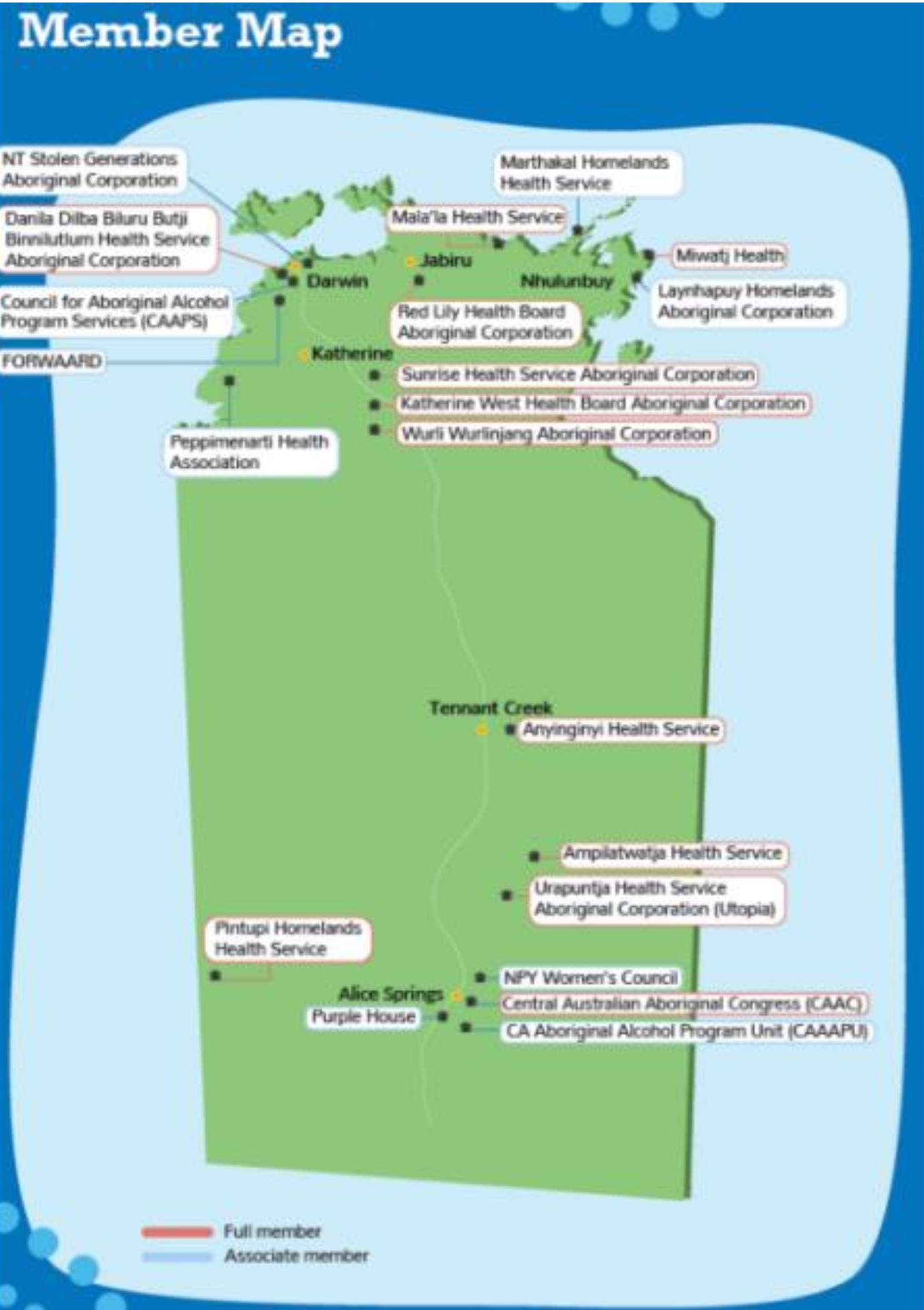


Acknowledgement of Country:
Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation.
Arrernte & Larrakia People.



**Aboriginal Medical Services
Alliance Northern Territory**







Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory

We are the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health peak body in the Northern Territory



CQI



Workforce Leadership



Digital Health



Social Emotional Wellbeing



Policy



Public Health




Research

Darwin

43 Mitchell St Darwin City NT 0800
Australia

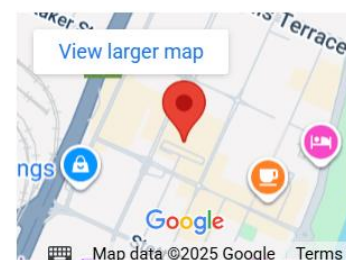
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34-36 Hartley St Alice Springs NT 0870
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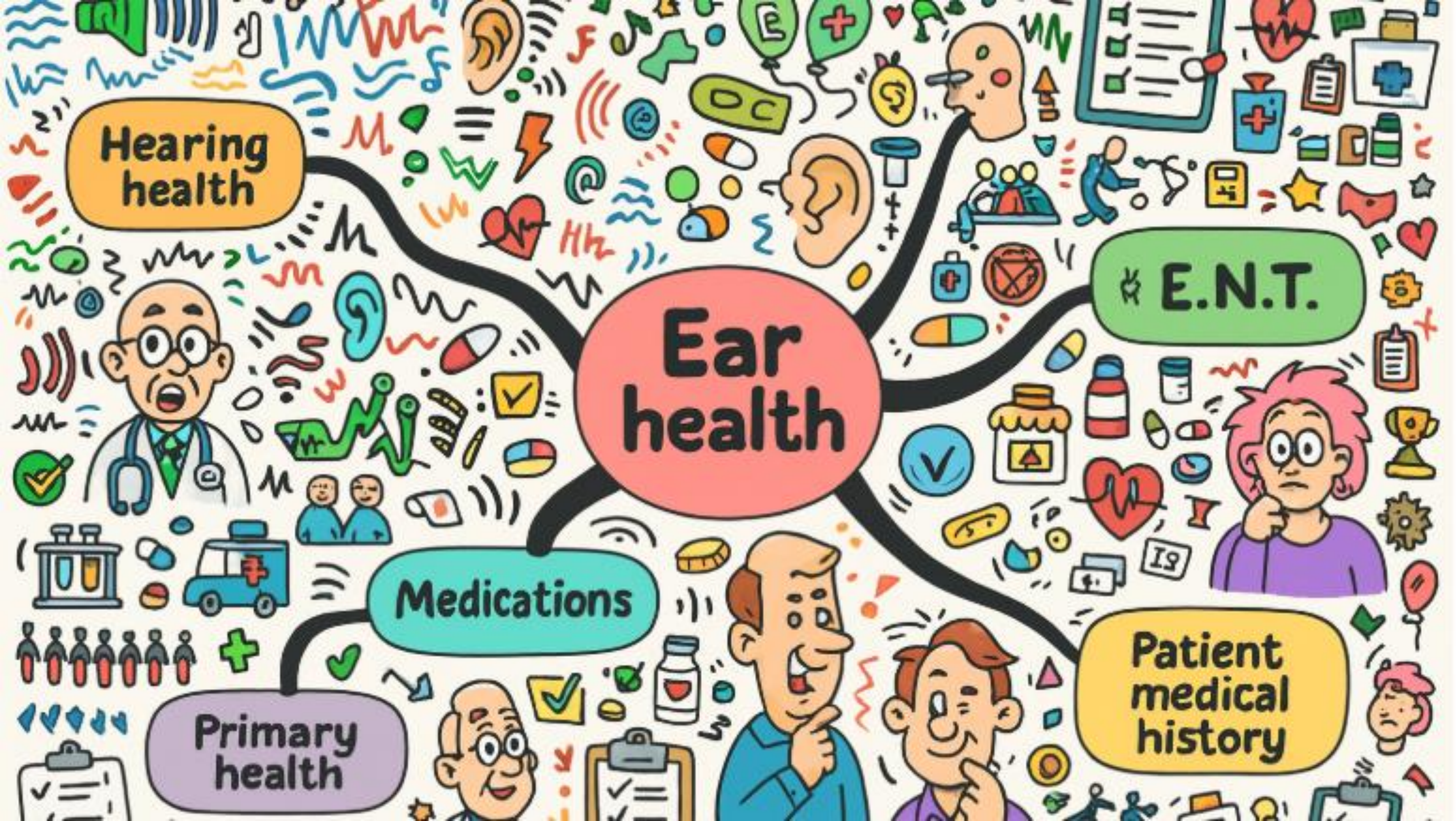
AMSANT Ear Health Coordinator Program

‘The purpose of this contract is to provide funds to employ an Ear Health Coordinator to deliver relevant ear and hearing health activities, in the respective jurisdiction, **to enhance capability and capacity of primary health care to deliver ear and hearing health services.**’

? What are PHC services meant to be doing?

? What is impacting their capacity to do this?

?How can we enhance this capacity?



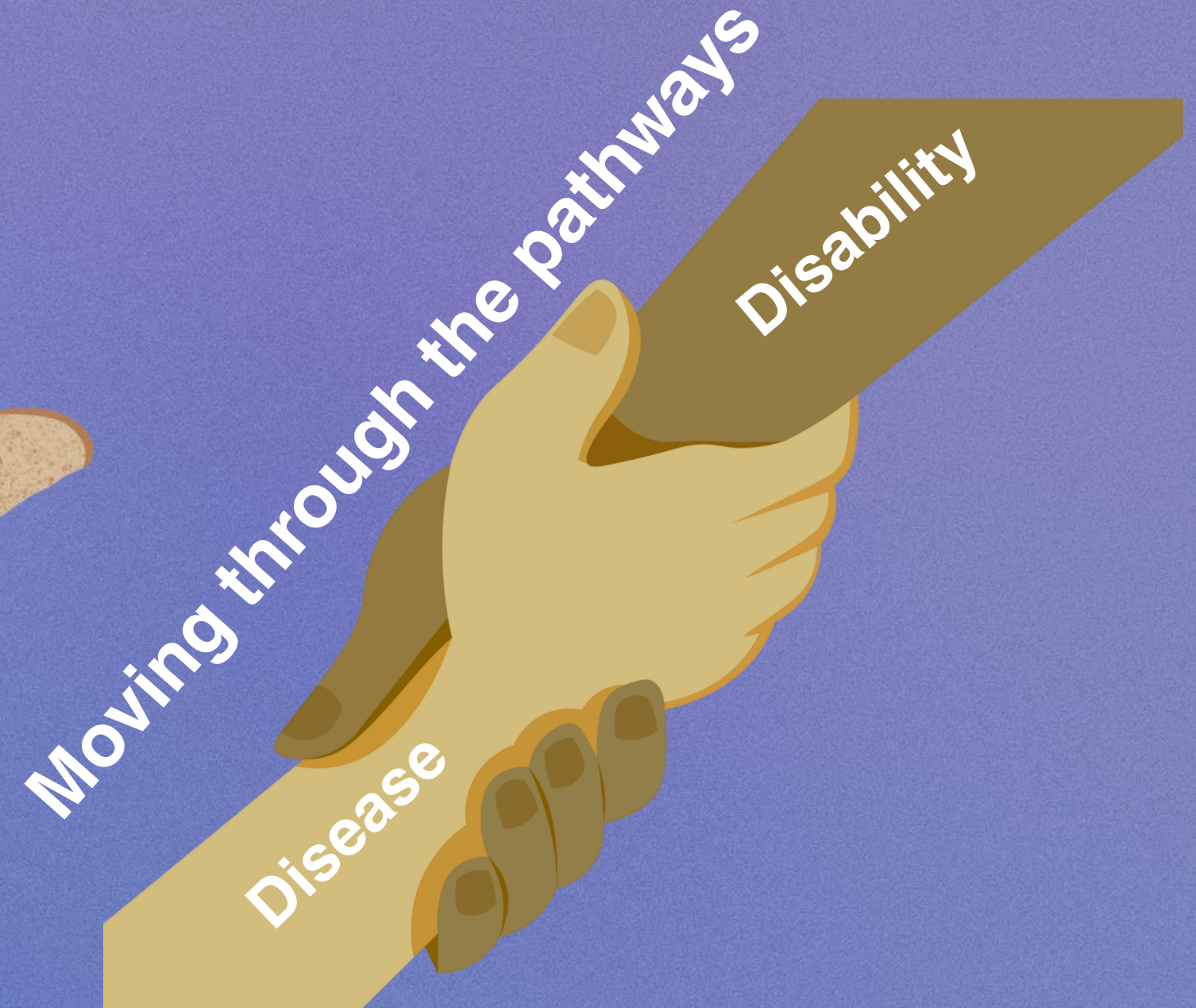
Otitis Media: Disease and Disability



- Primary Health Care
- ENT



- Audiology Services
- School Programs



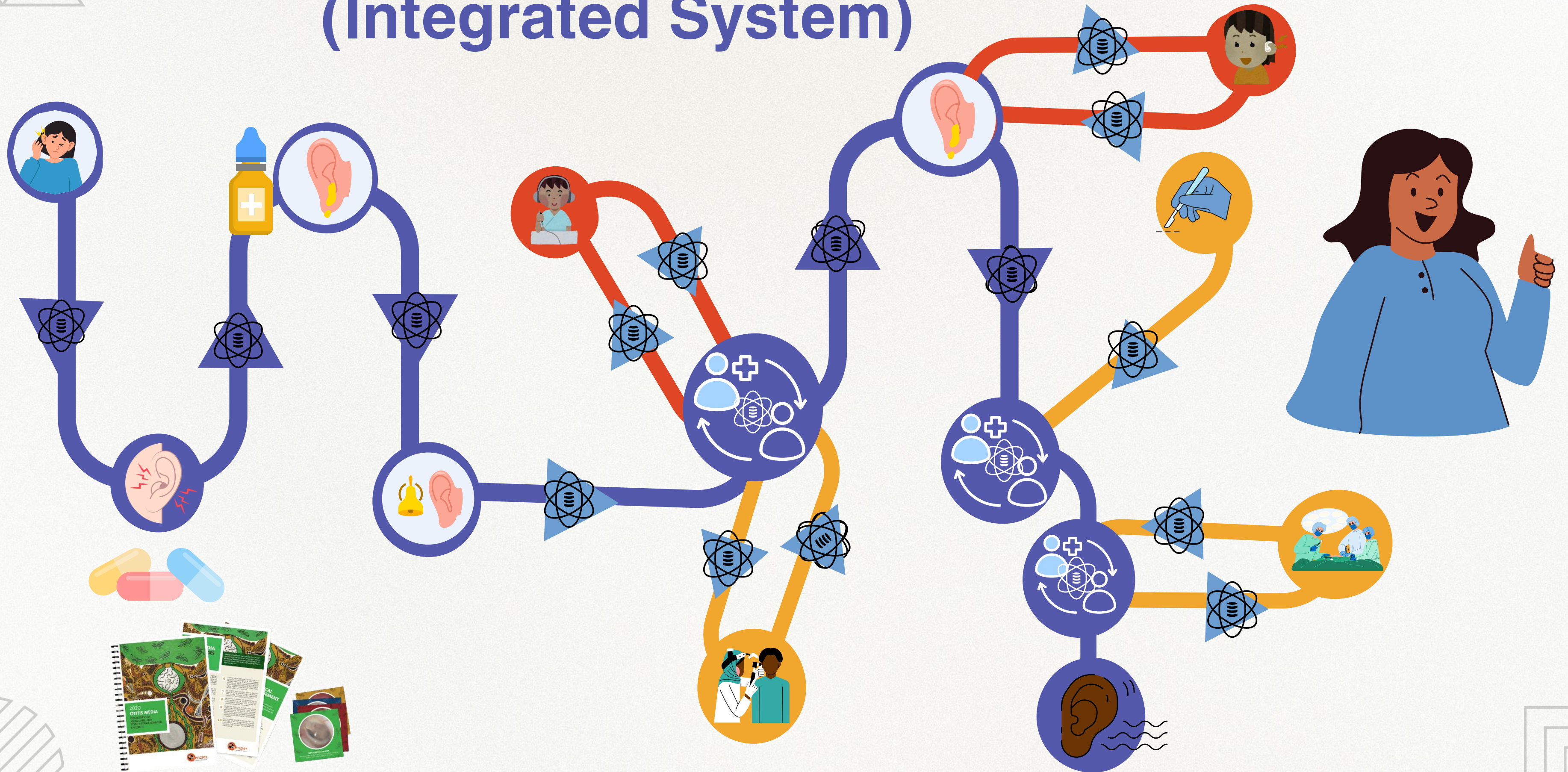


Sophisticated and Integrated Information capture and sharing

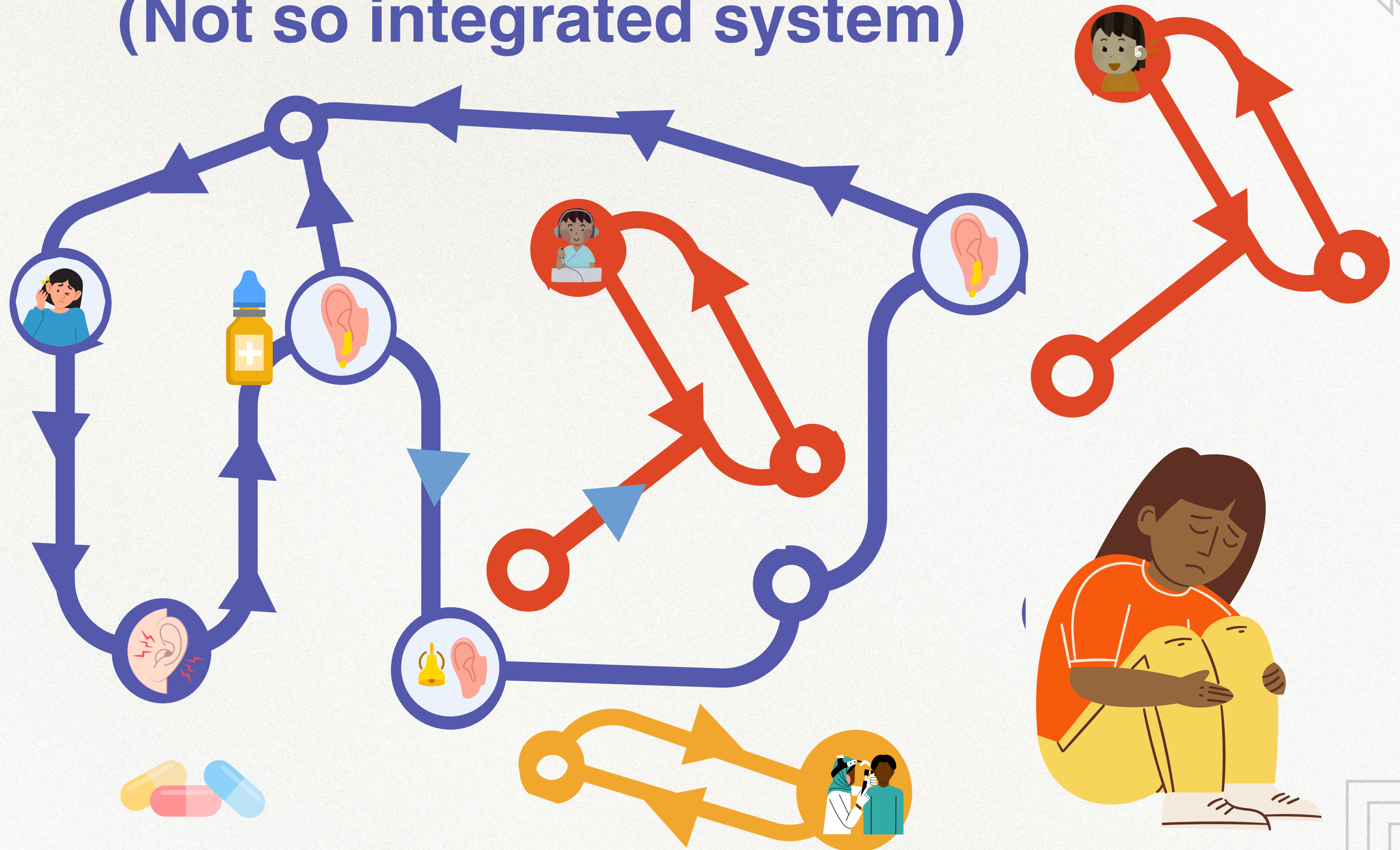


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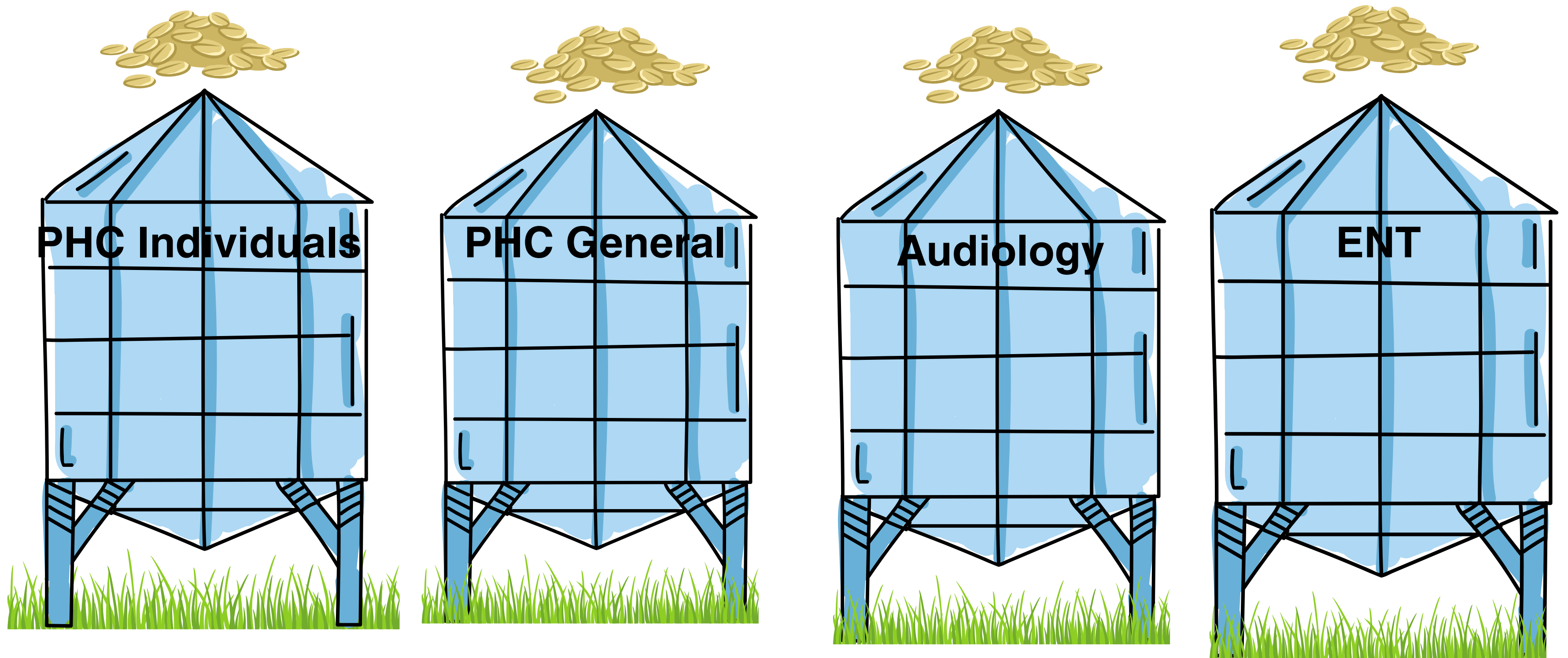
Patient Journey CSOM (Integrated System)

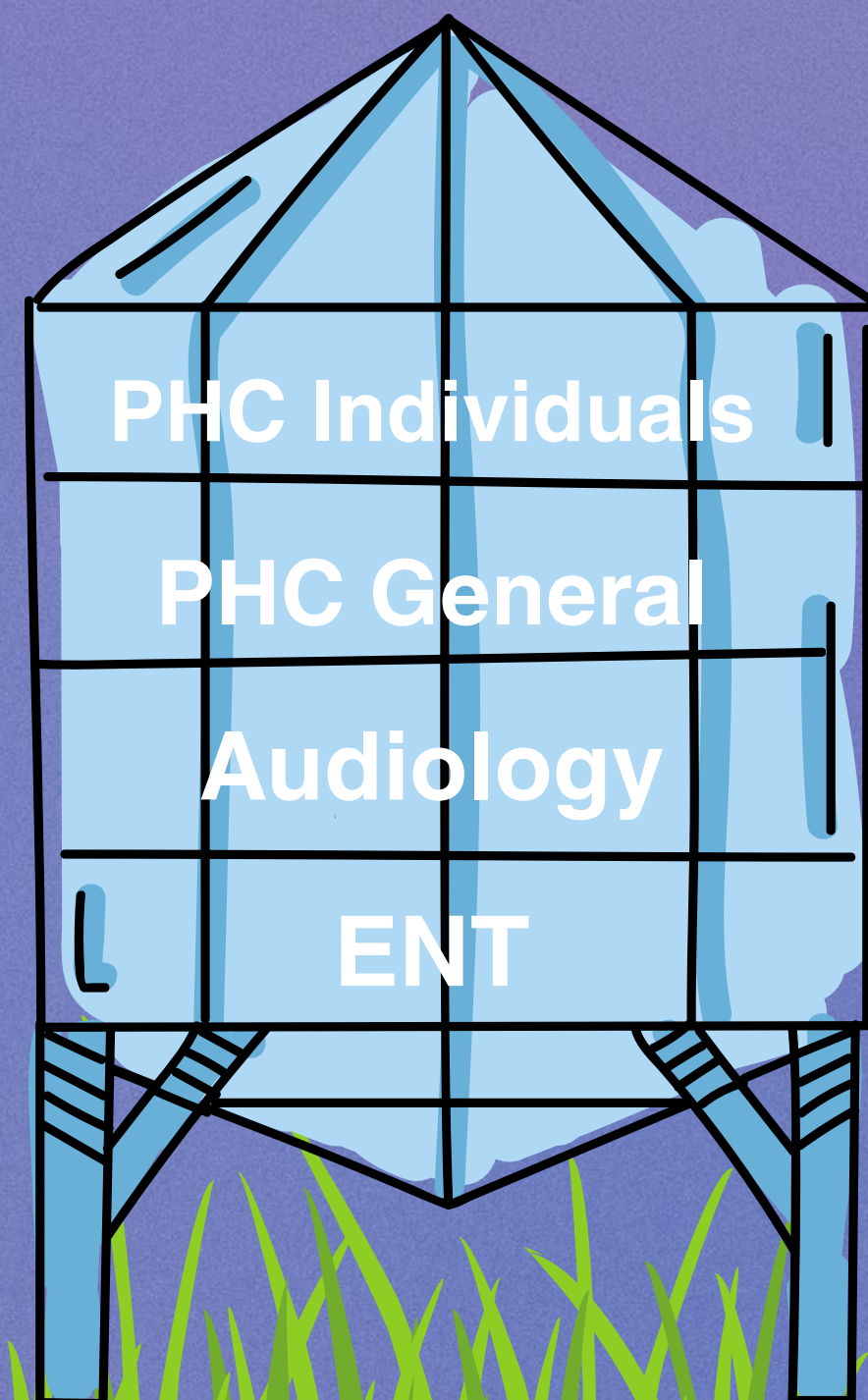


Patient Journey CSOM (Not so integrated system)



Barriers to integration and following best practice guidelines





Electronic Medical Records

Key Ingredients for following the Otitis Media Guidelines



HISTORY!

Otoscopy

Tympanometry

Accurate diagnosis of middle ear disease

Hearing Status

Developmental Concerns

General Medical History



Audit of Ear Health Input into Communicare



- Generally ear observations only in progress notes.
- Diagnosis only as separate diagnosis- no timeline view.
- Tympanometry only in health child health checks.
- Limited clinical assistance/consistency across the sector.

Check Up: Ear Health (Brief)

Check up: ear health (brief)

[Click here for further information](#)

This clinical item has been created to capture information and provide clinical guidance associated with ear health assessment and care, especially relating to the care of Otitis Media related conditions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. Please refer to the National Otitis Media Guidelines.

Ruby BETHUNE, Child Youth Assessment Treatment Service (Aboriginal Health Service) 31/07/2025 09:41:43

Comment

Display on Main Summary ☐

Display on Obstetric Summary ☐

Performed date 31/07/2025

Otoscopy | Tympanometry | Acoustic Reflex

Otoscopy

Otoscopy right ear 05 Retracted eardrum (17/11/2022 01 Normal)

Otoscopy left ear 12 Foreign body in canal (17/11/2022 11 Wax in canal)

Otoscopy notes (No previous values)

Viewing right: Common

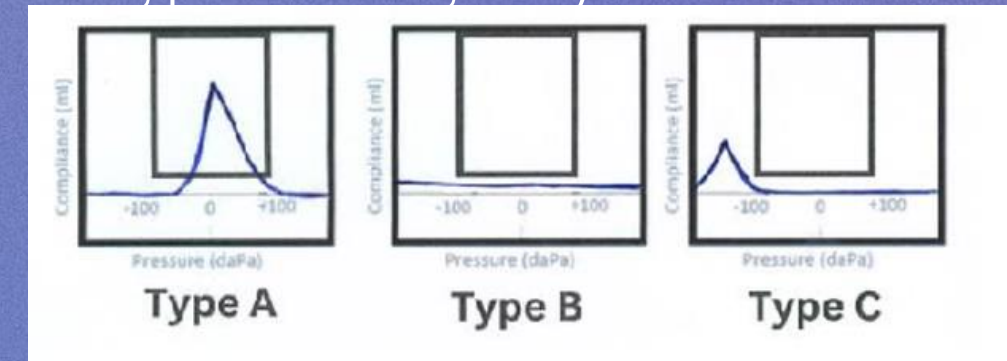
Print & Save Save Cancel Help

• **Chronic Suppurative Otitis Media (CSOM):** Ongoing ear discharge through a perforated tympanic membrane for more than 6 weeks, typically painless but persistent.

• **Dry Perforation:** Tympanic membrane perforation without active discharge, either transient or chronic. Can be referred to as inactive CSOM

• **Recurrent Acute Otitis Media (RAOM):** Defined as =3 episodes in 6 months or =4 episodes in 12 months, with periods of resolution in between.

Tympanometry: An objective test of middle ear function that measures ear drum movement in response to air pressure changes and sound. Helps identify fluid, perforation, or dysfunction.



Categories of tympanograms:

- Type A refers to a mobile ear drum with a peak inside the box.
- Type B is an immobile eardrum with no peak.
- Type C is when the ear drum is mobile but has a peak outside of the box.

Otoscopy

Otoscopy right ear 11 Wax in canal (27/11/2020 10:23 01 Normal)

Otoscopy left ear 11 Wax in canal (27/11/2020 10:23 01 Normal)

Otoscopy comments (audiology)

(No previous values)

Performed date 31/07/2025 10:58

Otoscopy

Otoscopy right ear 11 Wax in canal (27/11/2020 10:23 01 Normal)

Otoscopy left ear 11 Wax in canal (27/11/2020 10:23 01 Normal)

Otoscopy comments (audiology)

Previous measurements

Otoscopy right ear

Previous values

Previous Dates & Times	Value
27/11/2020 10:23	01 Normal
01/09/2020	01 Normal
17/10/2019	11 Wax in canal
12/07/2018	11 Wax in canal
12/12/2017	01 Normal
01/08/2017	06 Wet perforation
25/05/2017	01 Normal
27/04/2017	01 Normal
09/03/2017	01 Normal

Print

Close

Help

Check Up: Ear Health (Comprehensive)

Check up;ear health (comprehensive)	
Double click here for further information	
<small>This clinical item has been created to capture information and provide clinical guidance associated with ear health assessment and care, especially relating to</small>	
Ruby BETHUNE, Child Youth Assessment Treatment Service (Aboriginal Health Service) 31/07/2025 09:41:43	
Comment	<div>Display on Main Summary</div> <div>Display on <u>O</u>bstetric Summary</div>
Performed date 31/07/2025	
otoscopy Tympanometry Acoustic Reflex Ear Diagnosis and Management	
Tissue spears used	(No previous values)
Follow Otitis Media or local guidelines for patient education around dry mopping and tragal pumping (pumping of the tragus) for administration of ear drops.	
Ear Tx:med.admin.edu. given to patient	(No previous values)
Ear Tx:application of drops demonstrated?	(No previous values)
Ear Tx:tissue spear process demonstrated?	(No previous values)
Ear Tx:medication admin demonstrated?	(No previous values)
Hearing / Speech Concerns	
Hearing concerns	(No previous values)
Speech / language concerns	(No previous values)
Patient interest in mgmt of ear problem	
Identified interest:Referral audiology	(No previous values)
Identified interest:Referral ENT	(No previous values)
Identified interest:Ref.hearing support	(No previous values)
Identified interest:Ref.speech pathology	(No previous values)

Diagnosis & Management

Audiology diagnosis(Consider the patient's clinical history to determine whether this is an acute episode of disease or a persisting/chronic issue.)

Note: formal diagnosis should also be recorded by completing a clinical item for that diagnosis.

Right ear diagnosis

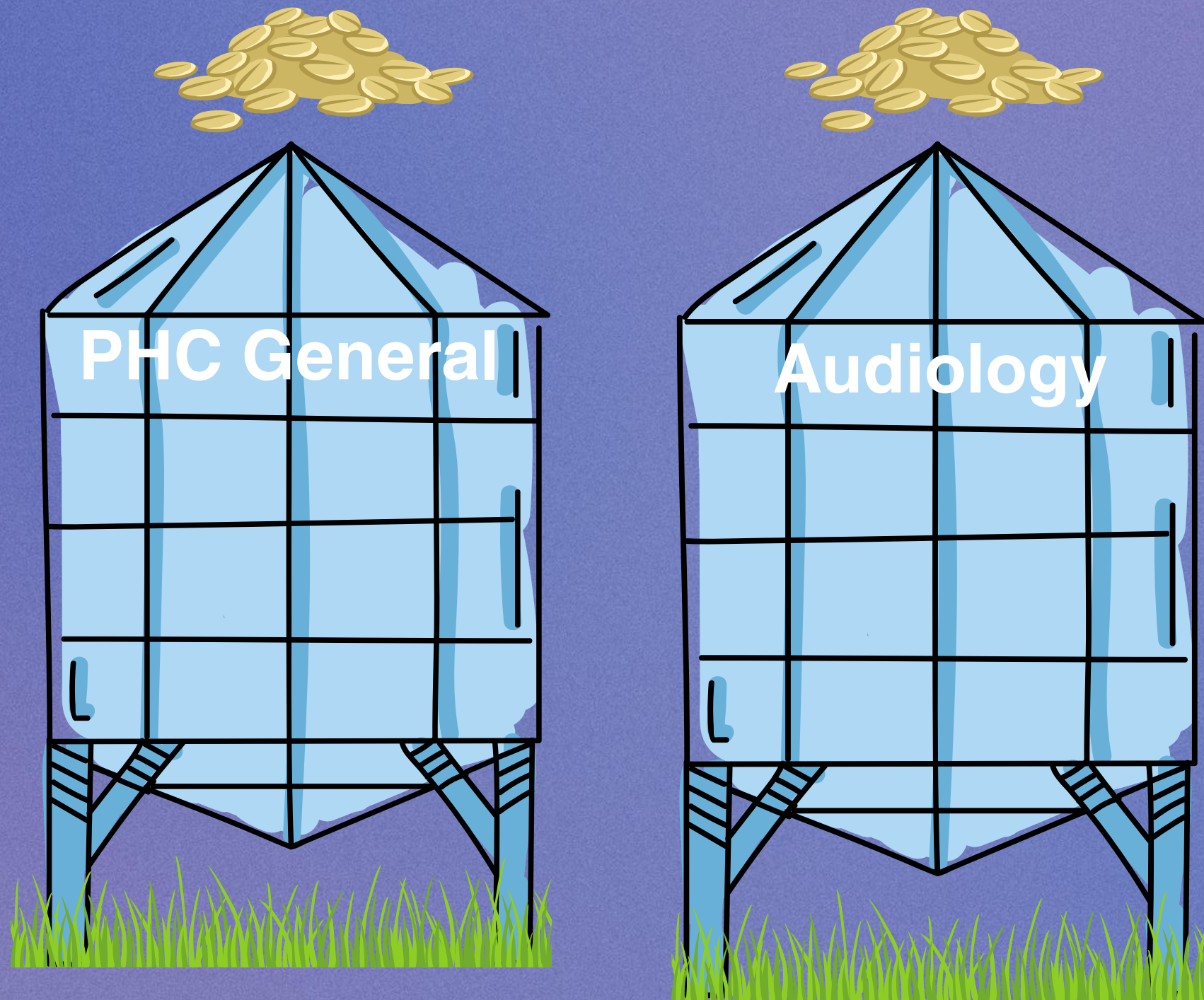
03 Otitis media with effusion (No previous values)

Note: formal diagnosis should also be recorded by completing a clinical item for that diagnosis.

Left ear diagnosis

03 Otitis media with effusion (No previous values)

Audit of Audiology Input



- PDF documents
- Progress notes
- Detailed data input- not cohesive with PHC

Audiology Assessment

Presenting concern	Otoscopy	Middle Ear Assessment	Hearing assessment	Diagnosis Management
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Diagnosis & Management

Audiology diagnosis(Consider the patient's clinical history to determine whether this is an acute episode of disease or a persisting/chronic issue.)

Note: formal diagnosis should also be recorded by completing a clinical item for that diagnosis.

Right ear diagnosis

03 Otitis media with effusion

(No previous values)

Note: formal diagnosis should also be recorded by completing a clinical item for that diagnosis.

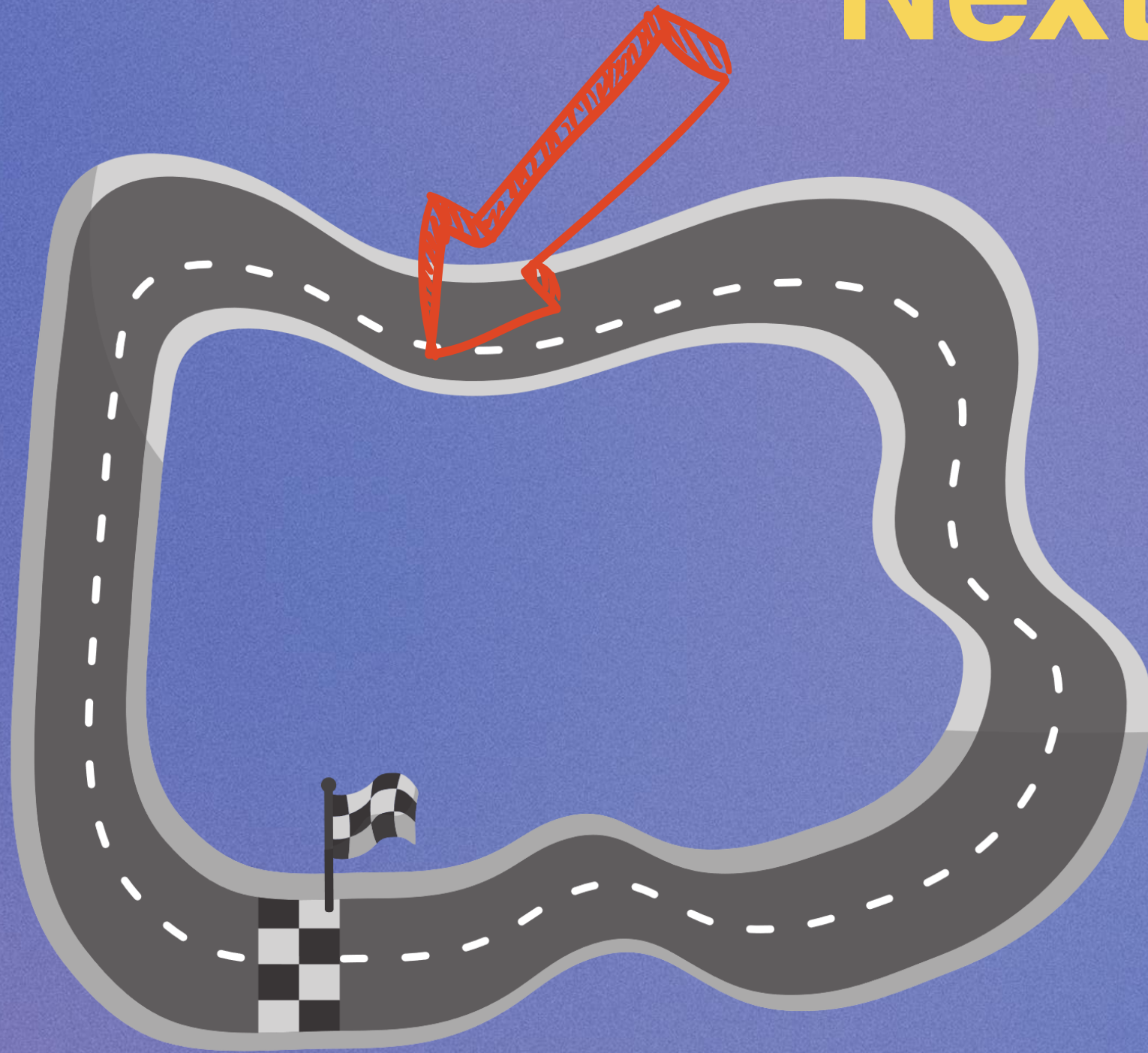
Left ear diagnosis

03 Otitis media with effusion

(No previous values)

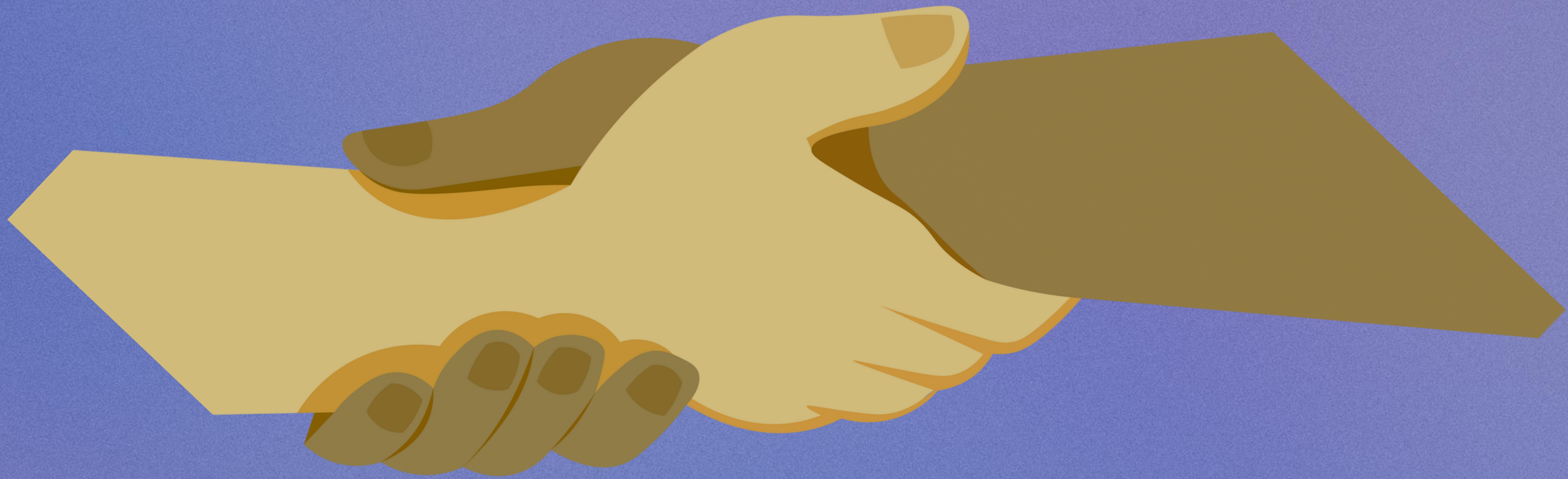
(>35dBHL in better hearing ear)			
Hearing Disability	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Blank (No previous values)
Health practitioner follow up	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Blank (No previous values)
Audiology follow up/recall	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Blank (No previous values)
ENT recommended	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Blank (No previous values)
Hearing aid required	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Blank (No previous values)
Hearing Aid Fitted	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Blank (No previous values)
Communication strategies advised?[1]	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Blank (No previous values)
Family consent to share info with school	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Blank (No previous values)
Active ENT Referral	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Blank (No previous values)
Active ENT waitlist	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Blank (No previous values)
Audiology Management Summary	<div></div>		(No previous values)

Next Steps



- Implementation
- Awareness
- Training
- Improving with feedback
- Standardisation in data capture across sector

Questions



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