

Caring for Mental Health

better mental health for the people of NSW

Mental health problems affect at least one in five adults, children and young people and can impact on families and communities. People with mental illnesses have an increased risk of suicide and psychiatric disability which lead to considerable suffering for individuals and their families.

The NSW Government is committed to improving the mental health of the people of NSW. Funding for mental health services has increased under the Carr government with a current budget of \$450M. NSW will continue to strengthen and develop mental health services by:

- encouraging mental health services to build partnerships with consumers and carers, general health services, general practitioners, other government and non-government agencies;
- providing 24-hour emergency mental health care throughout NSW;
- extending mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention programs;
- improving mental health care for all ages; and
- ensuring that mental health services continue to be of a high quality and deliver better outcomes for the people of NSW.

Working Together for Better Mental Health

We all have a part to play in improving the mental health of the people of NSW. Working together to provide better mental health services means building partnerships with consumers, families, carers, non-government organisations, other government departments and agencies, general practitioners, community support services and the broader community.

Consumers and carers

The NSW Government is committed to working closely with consumers and carers to ensure that their needs are met. To achieve this a Charter for Mental Health Care in NSW has been developed.

People with mental health problems frequently present to a variety of health and non-health settings. Working together with generalist health services, general practitioners, non-government organisations and other sectors is essential in providing an effective and caring response. Models of shared mental health care with general practitioners will have a vital role in offering comprehensive mental health care. A forum will be held with mental health non-government organisations to improve links with mental health services.

Working together

The NSW Government has formed strong links with other agencies through:

- ▲ A Joint Guarantee of Service between NSW Health and the NSW Department of Housing guarantees collaboration to address the housing and support needs of people with mental illness; and
- ▲ A Memorandum of Understanding with NSW Health and the NSW Police Service to improve the management of mental health crises involving both these services.

NSW Health will work with schools to develop education programs for prevention and early intervention in depression and aggressive behaviours. Links with other agencies such as Police, Housing, Education, Community Services, Juvenile Justice, Alcohol and Other Drug Services, and Ageing and Disability are also being strengthened.

NSW Health is improving the emergency mental health response through:

- ▲ 24-hour telephone access - Southern Area Mental Health Service has piloted a 1800 number with 24 hour staffing by skilled mental health professionals.
- ▲ Triage guidelines - South Eastern Sydney Area Mental Health Service has developed Emergency Department psychiatric triage guidelines and will be evaluating these and comparing them with other models.

24-hour access to mental health services

NSW Health will ensure that people in acute need have 24-hour emergency access to mental health care through a 24-hour 1800 mental health telephone line staffed by skilled mental health professionals. This will assist people with acute mental health crises to find the help they need.

Emergency Departments and Mental Health Services will work together to assess, manage and refer people with mental health crises.

Promoting mental health and preventing mental health problems

NSW Health will provide mental health programs that will promote mental health, increase resilience, prevent mental health problems and improve early intervention.

Depression and related problems may affect up to one in five people during their life time. Among all mental illnesses, depression is expected to contribute the greatest disease burden in the developing world and to rank second world wide by 2020. NSW will provide screening, prevention, early intervention and treatment for younger and older people at risk of depression. Clinical Practice Guidelines for Depression in Young People and resources for adolescent depression prevention programs will be introduced.

Depression

- ▲ Education, screening, counselling and treatment programs for women with Post Natal Depression have been implemented.

Suicide prevention is a priority for the NSW Government. A whole of government Suicide Prevention Strategy for NSW is being finalised. Suicide Prevention resources include; Care and Support Packs for people bereaved by suicide; a revised policy for managing suicidal persons in health care settings; kits for media reporting and management of suicide at a local level; and a list of current suicide prevention initiatives. A Youth Suicide Prevention Training Manual is also being developed. Suicide in children and adolescents will be examined by the Centre for Mental Health and the Child Death Review team.

Suicide Prevention

- ▲ \$15M has been allocated for suicide prevention programs. The NSW Suicide Prevention Statement We Can All Make A Difference was launched in 1997

Conduct disorder in childhood, aggressive behaviours and antisocial and delinquent behaviours in adolescence cause enormous human, educational and economic costs. NSW will implement positive parenting programs in each Area. Aggression prevention programs will be developed in collaboration with School Link programs.

Early Intervention for young people experiencing a first episode of psychosis or depression can improve outcomes for individuals and their families. NSW has funded and coordinated a network of programs for early psychosis and depression.

Early Intervention

- ▲ The NSW Government has provided \$1.4M to set up Early Psychosis and Depression programs for young people.
- ▲ "Sally's Story", a training video on early psychosis has been developed for mental health workers.
- ▲ An Early Psychosis Training Kit and Clinical Guidelines for Early Psychosis and Depression have been distributed.

Better mental health care

Streamlining access, improving assessment and treatment and developing discharge protocols can improve outcomes for individuals, their families and the community. To achieve this, all Health Areas will have:

- a single process for entry into all mental health services with systematic triage, clinical assessment and treatment planning;
- clinical guidelines to improve the assessment, management and individual care plans for common psychiatric disorders;
- discharge protocols to ensure continuity of care between inpatient, community and GPs.

Guidelines for better mental health care

- ▲ Circular 98/31 - *Policy guidelines for the management of patients with possible suicidal behaviour for NSW health staff and staff in private hospital facilities* have been developed and are being implemented.
- ▲ Funding has been allocated to the NSW Schizophrenia Fellowship to develop guidelines for the care of people with schizophrenia.

Children, Young People and Families: Mental health problems in children and adolescents can affect their ability to achieve normal milestones and development and to utilise schooling. NSW Health will ensure that all Areas provide coordinated mental health services for children, young people and their families.

Within the NSW Health sector, collaborative programs for children, adolescents and families will be established through School Link and Youth Link. These will support children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural problems and their families.

Adult mental health - Acute care: The best possible care for people with a mental health problem in acute community and inpatient care will be provided. Special care protocols for the first episode of illness and first year of treatment will be developed to ensure the best

opportunity for recovery. NSW will provide additional acute care programs in rural and growth areas such as the Western suburbs of Sydney.

Mental Health Services for Adults

- ▲ \$150,000 has been allocated to review acute care pathways in three sites in NSW.
- ▲ A needs assessment of licenced Boarding House residents in NSW has been undertaken with the Departments of Ageing and Disability, Community Services and Health.

Adults - Extended Care: Programs with the Departments of Housing, Ageing and Disability, Community Services and others will be developed for people with psychiatric disabilities. Psychosocial rehabilitation programs based on evidence will be provided in each Area. These will include vocational, social and cognitive interventions.

Older People: By collaborating with other health agencies, NSW will provide better services for older people. Psychogeriatric assessment protocols and special programs to support people with mental health problems in nursing homes will be implemented.

Mental Health Services for Older People

- ▲ Depression screening and treatment programs for older people have been funded in all health Areas.

Specific groups within the wider population require more specialised mental health services to adequately meet their needs. To address this the following programs will be developed;

- In rural and remote areas, special initiatives will be developed to attract and retain specialist mental health staff. Support will be provided to general mental health programs and specialised outreach clinics will be developed from large rural or metropolitan centres to remote areas.

Mental Health Care for Children, Young People and Families

- ▲ NSW has allocated \$10.3M for additional child and adolescent mental health services including funding for new child and adolescent mental health workers, particularly in rural and growth areas.
- ▲ Programs for conduct disorder, depression and children of parents with a mental illness will occur.
- ▲ Family Help Kits have been developed to help families understand the mental health problems that affect young people, recognise early warning signs and know where to get help.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who suffer mental health problems as a consequence of trauma, loss or being separated as children will receive appropriate and effective counselling and care through education packages and good practice guidelines developed in collaboration with the Aboriginal Health Resource Centre.
- Educational programs to enhance the cultural competence and sensitivity of mental health care providers for people from non-English speaking background will be developed in partnership with the Transcultural Mental Health Centre.
- A strategy for Forensic Mental Health Services in NSW will be developed.
- Mental health programs for lesbian and gay young people and HIV positive people will be developed.
- Outreach mental health programs for homeless people will be expanded.

Mental Health Programs

- ▲ \$2.35 M has been allocated to the New Children's Hospital to enhance statewide telepsychiatry outreach for specialist support to rural and remote areas and to increase local capacity to deal with child and adolescent mental health problems.
- ▲ The NSW Aboriginal Mental Health Policy: has been released
- ▲ The NSW Government has allocated \$80,000 to develop strategies and review service delivery models for people with a substance use disorder and a mental health problem. Funding is provided to the Transcultural Mental Health Centre.

Ensuring good quality and effective mental health services in NSW

To achieve this, NSW will:

- Ensure improved outcomes for mental health consumers through the implementation of best practice guidelines for the care of people living with psychiatric disorders and by measuring mental health outcomes.
- Implement the National Standards for Mental Health Services.
- Develop a Directory of Mental Health Education and Training Programs in NSW to support the education and training of the mental health workforce.

Quality NSW mental health services

- ▲ The Official Visitors program has been extended, with 86 new Official Visitors appointed.
- ▲ \$138,000 has been allocated for the development of a strategy to address the needs and future directions of mental health education and training in NSW.

Putting the Building Blocks in Place

To enable NSW Health to do this, we will:

- use resources in the most effective way;
- improve mental health information systems by providing information for continuity of care across service settings through the NSW Community Health Information System;
- work together with Area Health Services to develop effective local service models.

Implementation

- ▲ Costs and activity of inpatient and community-based mental services have been accurately identified for the first time in NSW.
- ▲ NSW is leading a consortium of several States in the development and implementation of the Community Health Information System. \$24M has been allocated to this system.

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Further copies available from:
The Better Health Centre (02) 9954 1193.

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