



Kevin Humphries MP

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Healthy Lifestyles

Minister for Western NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 15th October 2013

NEW NUTRITION STANDARDS TO IMPROVE PHYSICAL HEALTH OF PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

Nutrition standards at every mental health facility in NSW will be overhauled in a bid to reduce the rates of chronic disease that currently sees people with severe mental illness living on average 25 years less than the general population, Minister for Mental Health Kevin Humphries announced today.

Mr Humphries said the move towards new nutrition standards followed the National Summit on Addressing the Premature Death of People with Mental Illness in May this year.

“One of the most important messages to emerge from the summit was that if we are serious about addressing the rate of avoidable death from cardiovascular disease among people with a serious mental illness than we need to rethink the way in which the food served in our mental health facilities supports recovery and helps people achieve good physical and mental health,” Mr Humphries said.

“I am very pleased to announce the NSW Government is taking the lead on this issue and have implemented nutrition standards that set a new benchmark for mental health units and facilities in Australia.

“The new guidelines will ensure that all people needing care in our mental health facilities are offered a choice of high quality, safe and appetising meals that meet their nutritional needs and support their recovery.”

Mr Humphries said the new Nutrition Standards for Consumers of Inpatient Mental Health Services in NSW provides a comprehensive guide for the development of menus and the preparation of meals within all mental health units and facilities across the state.

“People who are receiving treatment at inpatient mental health units have a fundamental right to receive food that supports every aspect of their recovery,” Mr Humphries said.

“Good nutrition is absolutely vital to improving the physical health of people with mental illness and that is why the NSW Government is committed to ensuring the nutrition needs of people receiving care at our facilities are met.”

NSW Chief Psychiatrist, Associate Professor John Allan, said the release of these new standards is one of many important initiatives in NSW that aim to help people with mental illness improve their physical health.

“I am delighted that after a lot of hard work we now have comprehensive nutrition standards for inpatient mental health units and facilities in NSW,” Associate Professor Allan said.

For more information on the Nutrition Standards for Consumers of Inpatient Mental Health Services in NSW visit the ACI website at www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au.