

## Issue date

24 November 2023

## Distributed to:

Chief Executives  
Directors of Clinical Governance  
Director, Regulation and Compliance Unit

## Action required by:

Chief Executives  
Directors of Clinical Governance

## We recommend you also inform:

Directors, Managers and Staff of:

- Mental health services
- Nursing and Midwifery

## Expert Reference Group

## Content reviewed by:

- Chief Psychiatrist
- Mental Health Branch
- Clinical Excellence Commission

## Clinical Excellence Commission

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Email: [CEC-PatientSafety@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:CEC-PatientSafety@health.nsw.gov.au)

Internet Website:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/sabs/Pages/default.aspx>

Intranet Website:

<https://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/index.html>

## Review date

September 2024

## Updated - Provision of written leave information for consumers on leave from mental health inpatient units

### Situation

There has been an incident relating to a consumer on escorted leave from a mental health inpatient unit. The provision of written information regarding the consumers' risks and conditions of leave is important to assist family and carers to support consumers on leave from inpatient units.

### Background

Approved leave is important in preparation for planned discharge from mental health inpatient units. Leave periods may present increased risk to the consumer. Written inpatient leave procedures are required to ensure consistent and safe leave planning, management, and review practices for both voluntary and involuntary mental health inpatients<sup>1</sup>.

### NSW Health Policy Directive

NSW Health Policy Directive *Discharge Planning and Transfer of Care for Consumers of NSW Health Mental Health Services* ([PD2019\\_045](#)) includes requirements for leave procedures (see Section 4.1). The Policy Directive includes a requirement for Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks “**to develop local written inpatient leave procedures to ensure consistent and safe leave planning, management and review practices for both voluntary and involuntary mental health inpatients**”.

As per Section 4.1.3, the consumer and the family/carer, or other care provider, **must be given written advice** for the leave period. This document should detail:

- purpose of leave
- departure and return times
- medication and supervision requirements
- guidance on measures to manage risks during leave
- contact details for the inpatient unit
- arrangements for crisis support
- any restrictions on the consumer's activities and agreed responsibilities.

### Recommendation

Mental Health services undertake an assessment to ensure requirements of PD2019\_045, including the requirements for provision of **written leave information**, have been implemented.

**Reference:** 1. NSW Health Policy Directive *Discharge Planning and Transfer of Care for Consumers of NSW Health Mental Health Services* ([PD2019\\_045](#))

### Required actions for the Local Health Districts/Networks

1. Distribute this Safety Notice to mental health inpatient units and all relevant clinicians.
2. Include this Safety Notice in relevant handovers and safety huddles.
3. Report any incidents associated with provision of written leave information into [ims+](#).