

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF PSYCHIATRIST FORUM
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NATIONAL AND WA SAFETY AND QUALITY INITIATIVES

The national Safety and Quality Mental Health Partnership Subcommittee (SQMHPS) has a national role for making mental health care safer for consumers and staff and improving quality of care. Currently there are 4 areas of work:

- Reducing the use of, and where possible eliminating restraint and seclusion.
- Reducing suicide and deliberate self-harm in mental health services.
- Reducing adverse drug events in mental health services.
- Safe transport of people experiencing mental health disorders.

Reduction of Seclusion and Restraint

The aim of this work is to reduce the use of seclusion and restraint and if possible eliminate these practices. The SQMHPS Seclusion and Restraint Subgroup are developing documents on the use of and guidelines for these practices to be applied in all states including WA and Territories. Reporting is also included as part of this process and the first reporting point – the rate of seclusion – has been agreed.

There a number of projects occurring in this area including:

- The National Documentation Project, which is aimed at collecting information for the development of standards, determining ways of measuring how effective these standards are and providing a resource for mental health services in these practices.
- The Beacon Demonstration Sites – there are 11 service sites across Australia aimed at becoming experts in relation to ways of reducing and, where possible, eliminating seclusion and restraint. In WA the North Metropolitan Area Mental Health Service is the beacon site with representation from SCGH, the Swan Valley Centre, Joondalup Mental Health and Graylands Hospital on the project team.
- In WA a Seclusion and Restraint Working Party is looking at these practices in WA and will work with the national S and R subgroup in this area.

Reducing Adverse Medication Events

The Reducing Adverse Medication Events in Mental Health Working Party (RAMEMHWP) is looking at ways of reducing adverse medication events in mental health nationally. Dr Rowan Davidson chairs this Working Group.

As part of this process the RAMEMHWP has put forward a project proposal aimed at improving medication safety in mental health services. The project will focus on developing medication information for consumers and carers, which can be given to them together with the Consumer Medicine Information Guides that accompany individual medications. The project will be coordinated by Dr Davidson.

Reducing Suicides and Deliberate Self Harm in Mental Health Services

The Australian Government's National Suicide Prevention Strategy promotes suicide prevention activities across the Australian population. The focus is to:

- Reduce suicidal behaviour by involving the whole community in suicide prevention.
- Improve the public's understanding of suicide and its causes.
- Increase support and care available to people, families and communities affected by suicidal behaviour.

Increased funding for suicide prevention activities was received as part of the Council of Australian Governments' National Action Plan on Mental Health.

The Australian Government intends to establish a new suicide prevention council. In WA the State Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan 2008 – 2013 is being developed by the Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention. An Inter-Governmental Agency Implementation and Advisory Group will be established, led by the Mental Health Division, to work in partnership to revise and implement this plan.

Safe Transport of People Experiencing Mental Health Disorders

Safety and quality of care are very important in mental health transportation. Transportation should be delivered with the least restriction of freedom and least interference with the human rights of the person. These rights need to be balanced with the safety of staff and others who are involved.

A range of agencies have responsibility for providing transportation to those people with a mental illness and the WA Police Service (WAPS) has a major role to play in the transportation process. An agreement between the WAPS and the Mental Health Division (MHD) was developed in 2001 to help with this process and this is to be reviewed to include proposed changes in the new mental health legislation expected to be introduced next year.

The SQMHPS has developed a document called *the National Safe Transport Principles*. The principles include:

- Showing respect for all those involved in the transport process.
- Consumer and carer involvement in decision making about transport.
- Establishing agreement between agencies as to how transport should be organised.
- Making sure that transport is organised quickly.
- Training staff in ways to manage difficult transport situations.

The SQMHPS recently reviewed the State and Territory transportation agreements with police. The findings were:

- All jurisdictions have agreements in place.
- The police are tending to become less involved in transportation of people with a mental illness.

SQMHPS will recommend that further discussion with the police around transport issues should occur. In WA an agreement has been reached between the MHD and the WAPS that a transport risk assessment will be

completed when a person needs to be transported and, depending upon that assessment, the police may or may not be involved under a transport order.

National Standards for Mental Health Services

The SQMHPS also has responsibility for overseeing a review of the National Standards for Mental Health Services. These Standards were released in 1996 and are applied to all mental health services across Australia. The SQMHPS have received the initial report of this review and have accepted it in principle but felt that further consultation is still required. A national forum is now being considered to further consult with all stakeholders around these revised Standards.

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC)

The ACSQHC was established in 2006 and its role is to:

- Lead and coordinate improvements in safety and quality in health care.
- Distribute information and advocate for safety and quality.
- Recommend nationally agreed standards for safety and quality improvement.
- Report on the state of safety and quality programs.
- Recommend ways of collecting information on safety and quality.
- Advise the various Health Ministers on these issues.

One of the priority areas of ACSQHC's work is to develop a national strategy for improving medication safety and quality

Current WA Mental Health Safety and Quality Initiatives

These include:

- **Clinical Risk Assessment and Management.** The MHD has developed a Clinical Risk Assessment and Management program to train staff in this area.
- **The Alleged Sexual Assault within Mental Health Services Guidelines Working Group.** This group has developed guidelines to guide services in managing situations where there has been an allegation of sexual assault.
- **Coronial Inquests.** The Office of the Chief Psychiatrist (OCP) monitors the implementation of the State Coroner's recommendations from all Coronial Inquests concerning mental health patients and patients in mental health inpatient care.
- **Analysis of Available Data.** From recent reviews of suicides in WA OCP has decided to:
 - Conduct a specific review of suicides involving trains in the metropolitan area over an 18 year period.
 - Carry out an analysis on the first 12 months of information from the mental health services reporting to the Chief Psychiatrist on deaths and serious incidents.
- **Office of Safety and Quality in Health Care.** OCP works closely with the Department of Health Office of Safety and Quality in Health Care in those areas where there are mental health consumers involved including:
 - Reporting of critical and serious incidents in patient care.

- Complaints management.
- Reviewing patient deaths in liaison with the Coroner's office.
- **The WA Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care.** The WA Council of Safety and Quality in Health Care provides advice to the Director General of Health and the Minister for Health on safety and quality issues across the whole health system and provides leadership for service quality improvement in WA. The Chief Psychiatrist is a member of the Council and provides advice to the Council on matters related to safety and quality in mental health care. The Council monitors the implementation of the WA Strategic Plan for Safety and Quality 2003-2008 and those recommendations of the Australian Council for Safety and Quality in Health Care where appropriate for WA.

Office of the Chief Psychiatrist