



THE AUTHORISED MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER Newsletter

April/May 2003

Jigsaw, the Newsletter for all Authorised Mental Health Practitioners

Community Treatment Orders Practitioners' Guide Survey

Attached to this Jigsaw is a survey on the use of the CTO Practitioners' Guide. The Guide was published in October 2002 and distributed widely throughout the Metro and Rural areas. I also conducted short information sessions at most mental health services.

This 6 month survey is just to evaluate whether people have received, read and used the Guide.

I would be very grateful if you could complete the survey and return it to me by e-mail- tim.rolfe@health.wa.gov.au or snail mail - Office of the Chief Psychiatrist, Department of Health, 189 Royal Street, East Perth, 6004.

Further Education for AMHPs

In 2002 we conducted 3 AMHP forums where we had a series of presentations and a panel of representatives from the Law Centre, the Police, the Review Board as well as the Chief Psychiatrist. Evaluations of the Forums were that they were useful and informative.

We would like to provide further education for AMHPs for 2003 and we would like your ideas and suggestions. If there is a particular subject matter or speakers please inform me and we will look at providing further education for AMHPs later in the year.

Police Triage

A pilot project commenced in January 2003 in the Central Metro police area (Causeway/Subiaco/Mosman Park) whereby when police are contacted to enact a Form 3 or for assistance with a mental health patient, then the police will conduct a short triage in order to prioritise the request. The police officer from the Incident Management Unit asks whether there is real or potential violence, real or potential flight risk and if sedation has been administered.

Answers to these questions determines the priority. Routinely mental health escorts are priority level 6 but this can be upgraded or downgraded on the information provided. If the risk is low the referrer is requested to reconsider police assistance request. Some referrers are viewing this as a second layer of triage and resisting cooperation. However, the Chief Psychiatrist feels that if this project can enhance the cooperation between the police and health services and result in the police only being used when they are actually needed (principle of least restriction) then it is important to support this project. If the project, which will be evaluated in the next couple of months, is seen as successful then it may be extended to other police areas.

In January there were 23 police escorts using up 37 hours of police time. In February 21 escorts using 36 hours of time and in March 27 escorts using 32 hours of police time.

Although the majority of Form 3's are made by medical practitioners in Emergency Departments it is important for AMHPs to work cooperatively with our colleagues in the Police Service.

Out of Hospital - Out of Mind 2003

The Review by the Mental Health Council of Australia of mental health services in Australia 2003 has been published. It is a nation-wide review of the experiences of those who use or provide mental health services. If you would like an electronic copy please contact me and I will send you one (tim.rolfe@health.wa.gov.au).

Review of the Mental Health Act 1996

The time for submissions to the review has now ended and the Stakeholder group is looking at the results of the 6 working parties over the next 3 months. Most of the submissions have been put on the Review website though some have requested confidentiality and not been reproduced. Unfortunately David Bruce retired as AMHP rep at the Stakeholder group, however that position is now filled by David Bishop. Angela Woodacre continues to be the rural AMHP rep.

A brief glance at the submissions indicates that there is general satisfaction with the role of AMHPs and there have not been many submissions, which detail any changes.

The submission from the non-government sector recognises the role AMHPs have played and suggest that the role be modified in line with the Northern Territory legislation. That Act recognises a wider group of AMHPs which would include Aboriginal workers and in some cases trained ambulance staff. They also bring the qualification time down to 2 years.

One psychiatrist would like the AMHP role expanded to include the making of an interim CTO. One consumer would like GPs to have similar training as AMHPs and scrutinisation of their practice.

The Australian Association of Social Workers would like social workers included within the Act as AMHPs alongside nurses, psychologists and OTs and that they must be full members of the Association.

The Australian Psychologists would like all psychologists in recognition of their training to automatically be authorised.

The submission from the Chief Psychiatrist recognises the useful and essential role for AMHPs and has no specific recommendations in relation to AMHPs. However, the Chief Psychiatrist does recommend that the term Mental Health Practitioners s.19 (1)(6) requires clarification regarding Enrolled Nurses.

The submission also suggests removing the requirement of three years experience for mental health practitioners as it is impractical and only relates length of service to quality. In effect all mental health clinicians would be mental health practitioners, however the Chief Psychiatrist would still maintain specific experience and qualifications for authorised mental health practitioners.

To look at the submission log onto the Review website at www.health.wa.gov.au/mhareview

Six Monthly Notifications

Thank you for the much better response to the request for AMHP Notifications for the second 6 months of 2002.

Some Stats for the second half of 2002

During that 6-month period July to December 2003 AMHPs completed 806 assessments under the Mental Health Act (752 in the metro area and 54 in the rural area). They referred a person on a Form 1, 225 times (198 in the metro and 27 in the rural) and used a Form 3 on 150 occasions (122 in metro and 28 in rural).

Examples-

Area	Assessments	Form 1	Form 3
Bentley	110	26	24
PET	191	49	36
Avro	74	34	4
Joondalup Community	109	2	1
Inner City	18	15	7
Osborne Community	15	3	3
Mirrabooka	5	2	1
Clarkson	4	1	3
Armadale	57	7	5
Fremantle	59	19	11
Peel & Rockingham	7	6	6
Morley	10	5	3

Please note that the statistics will only be as good as the information provided via the Notification Forms.

Education on Referral & Police Powers

I recently conducted an educational session for referrers (medical practitioners/ AMHPs), police officers and other health staff in Carnarvon & Geraldton. This presentation looks in detail at police powers and the referral process. If you would like a similar presentation for your service to which you can invite local health staff particularly from EDs and local police please contact me.