Pilot Mental Health Inter-hospital Patient Transfer Service

Background

The Mental Health Commission and North Metropolitan Health Service (WA Health) are seeking feedback from consumers, families and carers regarding a proposed Pilot service that will transfer people subject to a transport order under the Mental Health Act 1996 (the Act) between hospitals in the Perth metropolitan area.

The Mental Health Bill

The Mental Health Bill 2013 was introduced into Parliament on 23 October 2013. Under the Bill, transport officers will be established, who will also be able undertake transport orders. It is intended that when the Bill is operational a patient transfer service for inter-hospital transfers in the Perth metropolitan area will be established. The competencies of transport officers will be set out in the Regulations to the Bill.

The Bill is expected to be debated in Parliament in early 2014. The timing of the debate and the passage of the Bill depends on the progress of other legislation through Parliament. The current Act will remain in force in WA until the Bill is implemented and becomes operational.

The Bill is expected to have an implementation period of approximately 12 months after it is passed by both Houses of Parliament. The implementation process will be overseen by the Mental Health Bill Implementation Reference Group, chaired by Dr Judy Edwards.

The development of the future Regulations and specifications for transport officers will be done in consultation with stakeholders. It will be informed by the development and evaluation of the Pilot service, particularly from the perspective of consumers, families and carers.

The proposed pilot service

Under the current Act, WA Police are the only people authorised to perform patient transfer for people subject to transport orders. However in order to conduct a Pilot service before the legislation changes, it has been agreed that WA Police will confer Special Constable status on certain employees of the North Metropolitan Area Mental Health Service, solely for the purpose of conducting transport orders.

These staff members will receive specific training, and the draft curriculum is attached. The training and the pilot service are intended to ensure that inter-hospital transfers are conducted in a safe, secure and respectful manner.

Police will continue to conduct mental health escorts from community to hospital. An authorised mental health practitioner will still be required to use the forms stipulated under the current Act for every transport order.
The Pilot service will be evaluated, with a particular focus on the patient experience.

**Comments and input sought**

Consultation forums with consumers, families and carers will be held in December 2013 and January 2014. Input from these forums and generally from stakeholders will inform the pilot and also the future Regulations. There will be future consultation, including input into the evaluation of the service. It is anticipated to commence the pilot service in March 2014.

The following documents are attached:

- Flyer for the two forums, and providing details of how to give input for those who can’t attend the forums or who wish to provide additional input
- Draft curriculum for training the operational staff as developed by North Metro Health Service

A patient transfer working group will be established under the Mental Health Bill Implementation Reference Group (MHBIRG) to have ongoing input into the development of the Regulations. This is likely to be established in early 2014. To register your interest in having input into the work of this group, please contact the MHBIRG Executive Officer Breda Ryan (details below).

**Further information**

Regarding the Pilot
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Please note Catherine's working days are Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

Regarding the Mental Health Bill Implementation Reference Group
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