Welcome to the eighth Information Bulletin about the Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol Review. As the actual Review is now complete and we have entered the next phase of the Review process, we will now be referring to it as the Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Services Transformation project. This will begin with the Service Design Project.

Western NSW Local Health District (LHD) is now working to implement changes within Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol (MHDA) Services, in line with the recommendations of the recent mental health review.

The first stage of this work is the Service Design Project which involves planning and implementing the steps necessary to identify the detail of the future service mix and the range of community services that align with the recommendations of the Review.

This will include changing the current service mix: decreasing inpatient care and increasing community and residential services and strengthening community services in order to:

- focus LHD services on Ministry priorities
- better align services with demography and need
- use funding to best effect for the health of the population
- address gaps and minimise duplications
- increase access to evidence-based approaches, multidisciplinary input and peer support
- ensure a cohesive and integrated system of care
- increase responsiveness to the needs of Aboriginal people
- strengthen services for people living in rural and remote areas

In September the Implementation Steering Committee called for Expressions of Interest from LHD staff to participate in the project reference groups being formed as part of the service planning process. Over 200 Expression of Interest nominations for the 42 places available were received. This is a clear indication of the dedication and commitment of Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol staff. Choosing the members of the Project Reference Groups was extremely difficult, not only because of the sheer number of interested, knowledgeable and experienced staff applying, but also because of the need to put together small balanced and representative teams.

The Steering Committee is pleased to announce that Meg Simpson has been appointed to the position of Mental Health Review Program Manager. Meg commenced in this role on September 15 and is located in Sunlodge, Bloomfield Campus.

Meg reports operationally to the MHDA Director and in terms of project governance to the Director Operations, Chair of the Implementation Steering Committee, through to the CE as the Project Sponsor. Meg has a diverse background in project management across a broad range of government and non-government sectors including health, education, community and cultural development. She has extensive Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol experience working in service development, partnerships and health promotion prevention early intervention in the Western NSW LHD region.
Meg will lead the Project Team, comprised of the Project Reference Group Leads and the Project Officers (soon to be recruited).

**The Project Reference Group Leads are:**

**Ian Rawson**
Project 1: Service design for adults and older people with mental health conditions and high support needs

**Sharon McIntyre**
Project 2: Service design for adults acutely unwell / in crisis

**Ian Rawson**
Project 3: Adults / older adult community mental health team service design

**Michelle Schmich and Jolene Kallus**
Project 4: Community service design for infants, children and adolescents with mental health challenges

**Kristine Smith**
Project 5: Services for people with drug and alcohol-related needs

**Timothy Hewitt**
Project 6: Integration pilots for people living in rural and remote communities

**Patrick Rosser**
Project 7: Integration pilot for Aboriginal people

**Between now and the end of the year we will be focusing on each project in more detail through weekly updates.**

Broader consultation is currently being planned to hear from consumers, carers, staff and others who would like to be involved. An External Stakeholder Advisory Group is also being established. We want to provide as much opportunity as possible for people who are interested to be able to contribute to the process.

We welcome your input either through the Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol Review email address: WNSWLHD-MHReview@health.nsw.gov.au
Or by contacting Meg Simpson, the Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol Review Project Manager: Meg.Simpson@health.nsw.gov.au

**More Information**
Click here for Frequently Asked Questions regarding the purpose and key findings of the Review.

Further feedback and questions can be emailed to WNSWLHD-MHReview@health.nsw.gov.au. These emails will be answered on a regular basis.

You can also view the “Rising to the Challenge: Mental Health Services Review video presentation by clicking here (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gmJoKZnBYM).