Welcome to the tenth Information Bulletin about the Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol (MHDA) Services Transformation project.

We are currently working on the planning necessary to identify the detail of the future service mix and the range of community services required to best meet the District's population needs and align with contemporary practice. To do this, the Implementation Steering Committee identified seven key projects, each with a project lead and project reference group. The project leads come together with Meg Simpson, the Project Manager, to form the Services Transformation Project Team.

This information Bulletin focuses on Project 6: Integration Pilots for People Living in Rural and Remote Communities.

The project aim is to “Develop, pilot and evaluate an integrated approach to healthcare delivery for people with mental health or drug and alcohol needs in at least one rural or remote area in partnership between the LHD, primary care, Medicare Locals and NGO’s”.

The LHD has about 11.7% of its population living in remote locations and 18.3% living in locations with only moderate accessibility to services.

In general this project will follow some steps common across all the project teams. Step one was to assemble a project reference group that will report to Meg Simpson as Project Manager and the MHDA Implementation Steering Committee. There was considerable interest from many committed staff to be part of the reference group. The members were selected on the basis of their broad service representation of both LHD services and engagement with other partners.

The project lead is Timothy Hewitt (District Psychology Advisor) with other project members including:

- Dr Scott Clark (MHDA Clinical Director and Steering Committee Representative)
- Dianne Gill (Rural Adversity MH Program)
- James Hindman (A/NUM Parkes, Forbes, Condobolin)
- Clare Jones (Case Worker RN SMSHOP, Walgett and district)
- Sierra Van Wyk (CAMHS Clinician Cobar, Nygan and Dubbo)
- a Medicare Local representative, and
- Louise Robinson (Program Manager for the Western NSW Integrated Care Strategy).

The Reference Group has met on a few occasions and developed the first draft of the project plan. Over the next few weeks and months they will be gathering and analysing information along with all the other projects. This will include looking at the health needs of the LHD, the rural and remote communities and integrated and evidence based models of care used elsewhere for MHDA services.

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As a project the group is collaborating closely with all the other MHDA Service Design projects as well as the Integrated Care Program. This project will also support models of care that contribute to closing the Aboriginal Health gap, improving the patient/consumer MHDA journey leading to better access to MHDA services in rural and remote areas.

The next stage of the project will be to select one or two pilot sites and once endorsed by the Implementation Steering Committee, move to implementation of the project with local partners from the LHD, Medicare Locals and NGOs. The project reference group is impressed with the interest from many sites in being identified as a pilot site.

Following this pilot the intention is to replicate this model in other communities. If you have any questions about the project, or information about models of care and integration initiatives the reference group should be aware of, please contact us.

Next Info Bulletin:
Project 5 - Service design for people with drug and alcohol-related needs

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).

Updates will continue to be provided on a regular basis.