

Mental Health, Alcohol & Other Drugs



Health
Northern NSW
Local Health District



Health and Security Assistant (HSA) Model

Lismore Mental Health Campus

Summary of Proposal November 2023

Background

The Richmond Clarence Mental Health Service has approval from the Northern NSW Local Health District Executive Leadership team to progress the establishment of a permanent and dedicated 24/7 team of Health and Security Assistant's (HSA) for the Lismore Mental Health campus and specifically Tallowwood, Adult Acute Mental Health Inpatient Unit.

Current status

It is long term custom and practice that a security officer is rostered 24/7 to support management of the higher acuity of consumers admitted to the Tallowwood observation area, however these positions have not been integrated with the multi-disciplinary care team.

Predominately, external (contract) security officers are utilised to undertake this coverage. The external contractors are not a part of the team, do not have specific training in working with people with mental illness and do not have any other role and function when there is no demand for a security officer. The Security officers are used to address and manage violent and aggressive behaviours, they wear uniforms that identify them as security and have no other role and function in the mental health clinical setting. There is no evidence that supports the presence of security officers to minimise violence and aggression.

The other Inpatient Units engage security officers on an ad-hoc basis following identification of a risk to be mitigated.

The Lismore Mental Health campus has a security officer rostered front of house for night shift 7 days a week. This role manages security risks across the bottom of the Lismore Base Hospital (LBH) campus and is part of the campus emergency response to fire, code black and lockdown. This position will not be impacted by the implementation of the HSA model.

HSA Model

To reduce current expenditure and better support the needs of consumers it is proposed to establish a 24/7 HSA position for the Lismore Mental Health campus, with the position located predominately in Tallowood with flexibility to be used at Lilli Pilli and Kamala. The establishment of the position as 24/7 supports the acuity of the Tallowood observation area, particularly during the night shift when there are reduced nursing staff and the potential for code blacks to be called.

Health and Security Assistants (HSA) provide clinical support services including general assistance in wards, cleaning duties, transfers of patients, equipment and supplies at the unit and undertake security related duties as required or as directed.

Kurrajong, Adult Mental Health Inpatient Unit Tweed Heads use a HSA rather than a security officer and this position is rostered 7 days a week for morning and afternoon shifts. In addition, Kurrajong access The Tweed Hospital security on a need basis. Mid North Coast and South East Sydney Local Health District have also successfully implemented the use of HSA in the mental health inpatient units.

Proposed Staff profile:

- 1 x 8hour HSA afternoon shift will not change.
- The requirement to have a 24/7 Security officer modified to 1 x 8hours Security Officer on a night shift. The need for the night shift Security Officer cannot be eliminated as this shift is part of the Lismore campus emergency response plan and services the whole Mental Health campus.
- New 24/7 1 x 8 hours x morning/evening/night shift at HSA classification to replace the need for a Security Officer.
- This change is an overall increase of 2.57 FTE.

Additional benefits of proposed HSA Model:

The benefits to consumers of establishing a model where the HSA is part of the care team include:

- Specially trained and supported to respond safely and effectively to aggressive or disruptive behaviours as part of the care team;
- Broader scope to complete other duties such as assisting with bed making, linen bins;
- Participating in diversional activities with consumers; and
- Establish rapport and therapeutic relationships with the consumers.

Next Steps

- Consultation with Lismore Mental Health campus staff
- Consultation with the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association
- Consultation with Health Services Union