

Mark Jay
Deputy Divisional Secretary, Public Health – Regional
Health Services Union

Email: mark.jay@hsu.asn.au

Enhancement of Virtual Acute Care Response Service Model and Update to Service Title.

Dear Mark,

I am writing to you regarding a proposal to enhance the Southern NSW Local Health District's (SNSWLHD) Mental Health Virtual Acute Care Response (VACR) service model and update the service title of Triage and Emergency Care Service (TECS) to Mental Health Acute Access Service (Access).

This is a proposal. No decision has been made. I am advising staff of the proposal and inviting feedback. I will consider all feedback and will then advise of the decision made.

The intention of the proposal is to improve and increase access to brief intervention crisis services, currently being delivered by TECS and an opportunity for staff to provide feedback on an updated service title, which clearly identifies TECS as a Mental Health Acute Access Service.

VACR is an extended hours district wide service which primarily interfaces with the community and provides a rapid mental health response, short term engagement and crisis management for consumers not requiring long term case management for complex presentations.

VACR is a function of TECS and has been operational since 9 January 2023. VACR transitioned from a 5 day a week to 7 day a week service with consumer support available across the AM and PM shifts. The SNSWLHD Mental Health Line (MHL) triage team refers consumers to VACR.

As of 27 September 2023, VACR has received 53 referrals to the service. Consumers are being provided with a variety of support options and brief interventions and the average length of service delivery is 5 days. On discharge from VACR consumers are discharged to other providers, including NGO'S, GP's private counsellor and psychologists, and Headspace. Of the 53 referrals only 2 have been referred on to a SNSWLHD Community Mental Health (CMH) team.

It is proposed that the current VACR service model be enhanced to include:

- Referrals from CMH Acute Care Worker's (ACW) for consumers who have had a mental health assessment in the ED or as a CMH walk-in and do not require long term case management. VACR would be responsible for following up with the consumer within 48 - 72 hours to offer support and advocacy in executing the discharge treatment plan (referral to GP/NGO etc).
- Adult MHL referrals triaged as a Cat E, do not require medical intervention, and have had no safety/risk issues identified will be referred to VACR. VACR would be responsible for completing the mental health assessment for these referrals.

It is further proposed the service title for TECS be updated to Mental Health Acute Access Service (Access), which will clearly identify the role and function of TECS.

Should the proposal to update the TECS service title to Access, this will not constitute any amendment to the current contracts of employment for any staff and will remain in line with the current Awards.

There are no proposed changes to line management reporting requirements or elimination of positions.

TECS position descriptions will be updated, in name only, to reflect the new service title, e.g., Mental Health Acute Access Service (Access) – Manager. The current and proposed organisation structure is attached.

Tracy Bolton Manager TECS will hold virtual meetings where there will be an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the proposal. Meetings will be held from Tuesday 24 October to 7 November 2023, with responses via written feedback available until 10 November 2023. The schedule for the virtual consultation sessions is contained in Appendix A at the end of this document.

If you have any questions on this proposal, please contact Tracy Bolton on 0428 677 063 or Tracy.Bolton@health.nsw.gov.au.

If you would like to provide written feedback on this proposal, please email Tracy Bolton Manager TECS via Tracy.Bolton@health.nsw.gov.au by 5pm, Friday 10 November 2023.

I look forward to your feedback and will provide a response to feedback and decision by 20 November 2023.

Your sincerely



Tracy Bolton

Manager Triage and Emergency Care Support, Southern NSW Local Health District

24 October 2023

Encl.

Current and Proposed Organisational Charts

Email to all Staff

Appendix A: Schedule for Virtual Consultation Sessions.

Triage and Emergency Care Support Team

Date	Time
Tuesday 24 October 2023	02:00pm – 03:00pm
Wednesday 25 October 2023	02:00pm – 03:00pm
Wednesday 1 November 2023	02:00pm – 03:00pm
Thursday 2 November 2023	02:00pm – 03:00pm
Friday 3 November 2023	02:00pm – 03:00pm
Monday 6 November 2023	02:00pm – 03:00pm
Tuesday 7 November 2023	02:00pm – 03:00pm

All Community Mental Health Teams

Date	Time
Tuesday 31 October 2023	09:30am – 10:30am
Wednesday 1 November 2023	09:30am – 10:30am
Thursday 2 November 2023	09:30am – 10:30am
Friday 3 November 2023	09:30am – 10:30am
Monday 6 November 2023	09:30am – 10:30am
Tuesday 7 November 2023	09:30am – 10:30am

All Community Mental Health Managers

Date	Time
Wednesday 25 October 2023	10:00am – 11:00am
Friday 3 November 2023	11:00am – 12:00pm

All Community Mental Health Clinical Leads

Date	Time
Wednesday 25 October 2023	11:00am – 12:00pm

Priority Programs & Community Partnerships Team

Date	Time
Tuesday 31 October 2023	03:00pm – 04:00pm

Mental Health Inpatient Unit Leadership Group

Date	Time
Wednesday 25 October 2023	12:00pm – 01:00pm