

HNELHD: Closure of Riverview Lodge Wingham Hospital

Dear Member,

The HSU has received correspondence from the HNELHD to advise of its decision to close Riverview Lodge (T-Basis Unit) at Wingham Hospital. Despite the wording of the letter alluding to this issue being “discussed” with the HSU, it is highly disappointing to note that no formal information has been forthcoming from management prior to now.

The HSU urges members to read the attached document, to inform other colleagues, and to encourage them to join the HSU and have their say. A membership application is attached to this newsletter along with the correspondence.

Your local HSU Organiser will be on site next Monday 5 August to discuss the way forward and address members’ concerns.

The HSU is seeking feedback from members affected by this decision to remove an invaluable service to the Manning River community. Please forward your feedback via email to Organiser Michael Kearns, michael.kearns@hsu.asn.au and Industrial Officer Edmund Fry, edmund.fry@hsu.asn.au as a matter of urgency.

In unity,



Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD

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Health
Hunter New England
Local Health District

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Our Ref: HR File

26 July 2019

Mr Gerard Hayes
Secretary
Health Services Union
Level 2, 109 Pitt Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Attention: Michael Kearns (via email: michael.kearns@hsu.asn.au)

Dear Mr Hayes

RE: Organisational Change –Riverview Lodge T-Basis Unit at Wingham

Thank you for your time to discuss the Riverview Lodge T-Basis Unit at Wingham Hospital, part of the Manning Mental Health Service (MHS).

As discussed, Hunter New England Health (HNE LHD) intends to close Riverview Lodge as an inpatient unit and transfer care of patients with behavioural and psychotic symptoms of dementia to a community mental health model. Continued inpatient support will be provided from the Manning Mental Health inpatient unit as required.

HNE LHD would like to consult with the HSU regarding this change in accordance with NSW Health Policy Directive Managing Excess Staff of the NSW Health Service PD 2012_021. A number of considerations led the District to this decision. The Manning area has seen an increase in the number of aged care facilities providing care to this group of patients, which over time has reduced the need for a dedicated inpatient T-Basis unit in the area.

The 16 bed unit has operated below 50 per cent occupancy for most of the past three years and has not admitted patients with a mental illness since January 2019.

The District's Mental Health Service has been looking at ways to better deliver mental health services to this patient group and we believe this is through enhanced community mental health services, specifically in partnership with local residential aged care providers and GPs.

The Manning Mental Health Service already has a strong community based team, caring for people in the community and aged care facilities, which contributes to lower occupancy rates within our local inpatient units and enhanced patient experience by reducing unnecessary travel.

Acute mental health care will still be available for those patients that require it at the Manning Mental Health centre, where appropriate medical coverage is available.

The District has advised Riverview Lodge staff of this change and assured them that their positions within HNE LHD are secure. The District is offering alternative employment options with a focus on redeploying staff within the local Manning region. Employees have had the opportunity to discuss their employment preferences on an individual level with management and Human Resources (HR).

The District has committed to working closely with staff throughout this process and will ensure they are updated and consulted regularly.

A firm date for the closure has not yet been determined as we are prioritising staff redeployment and patient transfer. I will however advise you when a proposed date is set.

All staff have been advised of the above along with the support mechanisms of the Employee Assistance program (EAP) and key contacts with Manning MHS Management and HR. A representative from HR will be spending regular time at Wingham to support staff on an individual level and case manage their redeployment in accordance with the respective Policy Directive (PD2012_021).

If you have any feedback regarding the above, please contact Mr Nathan White, Senior HR Consultant on telephone 498 53291 or email nathan.white@health.nsw.gov.au or Ms Leanne Johnson, General Manager HNE MHS on telephone 403 35161 or email leanne.johnson@health.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Marcia Fogarty M.B.B.S., F.R.A.N.Z.C.P

Executive Director | Hunter New England Mental Health

CC: Mr Nathan White, Senior HR Consultant
Ms Leanne Johnson, General Manager MHS
Mr Michael Kearns, Organiser HSU (michael.kearns@hsu.asn.au)