

MLHD: South West Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service Changes

Dear Member,

Attached is correspondence the HSU has received from Murrumbidgee Local Health District advising of a review of the South West Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service Transitional Living Unit.

Member feedback requested

The HSU industrial team is currently reviewing the potential impacts of the proposed restructure upon affected employees. We are now seeking feedback, views and comments from our members.

Please review the attached documentation and provide comment and feedback by 21 January 2020. You can submit it by email to brendan.edghill@hsu.asn.au with subject line *MLHD Brain Injury Rehab*.

Not a member of the HSU? Now is time to join and have your say! You can join online at www.hsu.asn.au/join or call 1300 HSU NSW and join over the phone.

A union's effectiveness and negotiation power depends upon the strength and density of its membership base. Join your work colleagues today by becoming a member of the Health Services Union and help us continue to protect and improve your working life.

In unity,



Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD

7 January 2020

Mr Gerard Hayes
Secretary HSU NSW/ACT/QLD
Level 2, 109 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Email: secretary@hsu.asn.au

Dear Mr Hayes,

Re: South West Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service Transitional Living Unit Review

Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD) would like to provide notification of a proposed change to the South West Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service Transitional Living Unit. MLHD propose the following changes:

- Reduction in operating hours of the South West Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service (SWBIRS) Transitional Living Unit- Tarkarri, to align with a whole of service model of care enhancement.
- Review and update position descriptions of affected employees to reflect proposed changes and proposed operating model.

Background and reason for the proposed change

The MLHD SWBIRS was established in 1991 to provide a specialised traumatic brain injury rehabilitation service for clients close to home that assists with transition back to community living. SWBIRS was initially set-up to provide a residential Transitional Living Unit (Tarkarri) and community service. Tarkarri was built as a four bed, single room, facility and an additional 'flat' that can accommodate two people. Tarkarri has traditionally been run as a Monday - Friday service, with the expectation that residents would return to an appropriate community residence at weekends. The 5 day a week service has not had allied health input on a Friday since 2018, with only the Health Education Officer staff on site. Patients would normally leave to go home around lunch time, therefore the time available for meaningful therapeutic engagement on a Friday is minimal. There is data to support the assumption that therapeutic interventions with clients are minimally carried out on Friday mornings.

SWBIRS traditionally provided a high level of service to compensable clients, in both a residential and community service model, but this type of client has declined over time due to many factors relating to health and non-government factors in this sector. The demand for transitional living unit services has also reduced over time and the two-bed flat has not been utilised since 2015. There has also been a significant drop in length of stay required to meet client goals for the four-bed Tarkarri unit with an average of 20 patients per year accessing the service over the past three years. This has resulted in weeks when the Tarkarri unit has not had any patients suitable to attend.

SWBIRS also provide an outreach, community based service for paediatric and adult clients with a traumatic brain injury. The outreach team is expected to provide services to patients living in their own homes across MLHD. In line with the direction to provide enhanced ambulatory models of care across the whole of MLHD, SWBIRS has recognised the need to enhance the services provided to patients living in the community which will involve all members of the team.

Objectives and principles of the proposed changes

SWBIRS has a primary focus on providing equitable, high-quality, evidence based services to all clients within the District. A model of care that supports clients in all stages of their recovery journey, regardless of their geographic location, is a key objective for SWBIRS.

MLHD believes the proposed changes will provide an enhanced, more equitable, cost effective service for the District. The principles behind the proposed changes include:

- Develop and implement a residential therapy program that is evidence based and provides a level of therapeutic intensity to achieve patient goals. This program would be flexible to allow community patients within the local geographic area to attend if suitable to their needs.
- Rostering for anticipated clients, based on referrals, to be completed in 4 weeks cycles. If there are no anticipated clients who require a residential program, all team members will be redeployed to community outreach caseload. This will mean that there may be periods of time when Tarkarri is closed for overnight stay.
- Tarkarri Transitional Living Unit to operate in a 4 day a week model, taking advantage of maximum numbers of staff and patient availability to deliver a high-quality program.
- Enhancing the community outreach model to allow allied health staff flexibility to address the needs of patients across the continuum of their rehabilitation journey-right care, in the right place, at the right time.
- Increase linkages with the District Rehabilitation services, such as the Ambulatory Rehabilitation Service teams, to allow SWBIRS to access relevant services and expertise across the District when applicable to achieve patient goals.
- Improve access to appropriate care for all patients living in MLHD with a brain injury.
- Transitional Living Unit to provide enhanced program over four days.
- Allied Health staff to have increased capacity to provide services based on client need, not geographical location.
- Access to evidence based, timely assessment and intervention in suitable environment for their goals (i.e. Transitional Living Unit, or community).

Impact on service and staff

Although there will be no impact on the service, in the contrary, the proposed changes will enhance the service available to all clients, there will be potential impact on affected staff:

- Health Education Officer shifts to be reduced by 12 shifts per four week roster cycle (one day, one evening and one night shift). This will largely impact the two permanent full-time Health Education Officer staff who currently work in the Transitional Living Unit. Consideration for reallocation of these shifts to outreach work within SWBIRS has been analysed and there is not sufficient demonstration of demand to warrant total reallocation of this resource.

- Health Education Officer roles will be enabled to work in an Allied Health Assistant framework in the outreach service model at times when Tarkarri unit is not required. Practically, this will involve Health Education Officers assisting Allied Health Professionals to implement targeted therapy programs in a community setting, which is already part of the role currently.
- SWBIRS staff will have a flexible workforce model that will allow services to be provided across the continuum of care, based on client need. This model will enable all staff to provide services to clients living at home to a clinically relevant intensity, as well as enabling services to be provided into Tarkarri unit when required.

Consultation

A consultation period has been arranged and will commence from **Monday 13 January 2020 until Sunday 26 January 2020**.

It is important to note that no final decision will be made until all feedback has been genuinely considered.

Communication with staff during the consultation period will occur via email, team meetings and individual consultation. A letter has been provided to affected staff advising of the proposed changes and consultation period.

A meeting will be held **Thursday 30 January 2020** to share feedback received with the affected employees and to provide affected staff with the final decision and implementation details. The proposed implementation date will be **Monday 10 February 2020**.

All affected staff are strongly encouraged to actively participate in this consultation phase.

Support

Support for affected staff will be provided via MLHD's Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

In addition, the MLHD People and Culture Directorate is available to support staff. The key contact is: Anne McLeish, Industrial Relations Specialist, phone: 02 6023 7170

Email: Anne.McLeish@health.nsw.gov.au

If you would like to discuss this letter further, or arrange a meeting, please contact me on 036 842 214.

Yours sincerely



Tegan Reid
Allied Health Manager
Murrumbidgee Local Health District