

MEDIA RELEASE

New approach to mental health puts patients' needs first

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A new model of primary mental health care that has been implemented in the Murray PHN region is based on putting patients' needs first.

The new stepped care model is an evidence-based system that delivers the most appropriate care for each patient, from low to high intensity, depending on their need at any time.

Murray PHN CEO Matt Jones said that the transition from the "one stop shop" model to the integration of a range of patient-focused therapies is progressing well across our region. It is a tribute to the professionalism of both previous and current service providers, who have placed patient welfare ahead of other concerns.

"Even more pleasing has been the opportunity for these providers to work more collaboratively with us as funders, and with each other," he said.

The new system supports disadvantaged individuals to access clinical mental health support close to home where possible, at no charge. The services offered are both psychological support services (PTS – General) and primary mental health clinical care coordination (PMHCCC).

PTS – General supports people less able to pay fees, people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, people in rural and remote communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, those with an intellectual disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

PMHCCC provides clinical care coordination for people with severe mental illness, to reduce their chance of hospital admissions and improve their physical health, mental health and wellbeing.

"This one-size-fits-all approach just doesn't work with mental health. So we're changing the system," Mr Jones said.

"The starting point is about assessing a patient's needs and ensuring they have access to low-intensity services, making sure those are connected to credentialed mental health services and acute psychiatric services as needed," he said.

"The model starts with patients – and it is all about patient needs. We need to have a system that's connected, that's accessible and is also effective and efficient.

"This is an approach that people need, that communities deserve and that taxpayers expect," Mr Jones said.

Patients who do not qualify under the PTS and PMHCCC guidelines are still eligible for primary mental health care under the Better Access system, which enables up to ten treatment sessions per year.

Contact details

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