

Date 11 February 2010

Progress Report on the Department of Families Housing Community Services & Indigenous Affairs COAG Community Mental Health Initiatives

Mental Health Program Evaluation

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) is currently undertaking a strategic evaluation of its three COAG community mental health programs to address the changing context of community mental health and FaHCSIA's role more broadly in mental health service delivery. The evaluation commenced in July 2009 and a final report is due in March 2010.

The evaluation will involve extensive consultations with stakeholders, including clients from the three programs. An Evaluation Advisory Committee, comprised of key stakeholders will provide advice and monitor progress of the evaluation.

The Committee membership includes representatives from the National Advisory Council on Mental Health, Mental Health Council of Australia, Community Mental Health Australia, Department of Health and Ageing, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, FaHCSIA and consumer and carer representatives. The Advisory Committee's met in August and they will meet on two further occasions throughout the course of the evaluation.

Personal Helpers and Mentors Program (PHaMs) (\$284.8m over five years)

The Personal Helpers and Mentors Program has assisted around 8,900 people (as at December 2009) whose lives are severely affected by mental illness.

Information about PHaMs, including the location of successful providers, can be located through the FaHCSIA's website at:

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/mentalhealth/progserv/PersonalHelpersMentorsProgram/Pages/default.aspx>

PHaMs Round 4

The Minister has approved 10 new sites under PHaMs round four to cover servicing gaps either geographically or by specific groups of vulnerable communities. These sites are in addition to the seven sites announced in 2009 using the Remote Service Model. The remainder of the round 4 funding will expand 17 "At Capacity" sites.

FaHCSIA has consulted with the National Advisory Council on Mental Health, peak organisations representing vulnerable Australians and state and territory governments, to identify sites and prospective providers. The selection of providers for the ten sites will be through a restricted selection process.

More Respite Places to Help Families and Carers (\$224.7m over five years)

In 2008-09 the Mental Health Respite Program assisted more than 23,500 carers.

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres (Centres) broker respite for carers of people with mental illness and carers of people with intellectual disability, including Autism. FaHCSIA was able to provide an additional \$4.2 million from existing program funding to 41 Centres to meet the high demand for respite reported by Centres.

In addition, FaHCSIA has funded 134 service providers around Australia. The services variously provide respite and support to carers and their families as well as education programs for family and friends of people with a mental illness.

The list providers can be located at FaHCSIA website at http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/mentalhealth/funding/Pages/mhnrdf_rd_2.aspx

Community Based Programs to help Families Cope with Mental Illness (\$45.2 million over five years)

In 2008-09 the Mental Health Community Based Program assisted around 7,300 families and carers.

Phase One:

Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS) and Carers Engagement Workshops

The seven FMHSS funding agreements have been extended until 30 June 2010 to enable the services to be included in the Mental Health Programs Evaluation.

Carer Engagement Workshops

Over 1500 carers from across Australia attended the 116 workshops conducted by the Mental Health Council of Australia. Workshops for specific target groups included twelve for CALD groups, eleven for Indigenous carers, seven for young carers, one for carers of people with eating disorders and one for carers of forensic patients.

Minister Macklin launched the report from the Workshops: Adversity to Advocacy on 21 October 2009.

Phase Two:

Projects for Families and Children Coping with Mental Illness

Thirty-nine non-government organisations have been funded to deliver a range of activities and services that support families, carers, children and young people coping with mental illness. These services include but are not limited to: coping skills courses/workshops, parenting skills courses, resources and advice, support networks, recreation programs, mentoring programs, community engagement programs and Community Mental Health Awareness Program, targeting local communities including specific CALD and Indigenous communities.