Adjunct Professor Kim Ryan
Chief Executive Officer
Australian College of Mental Health Nurses
PO Box 154
DEAKIN WEST ACT 2600

Dear Professor Ryan

2014-15 Budget - Mental Health Nurse Incentive Programme (MHNIP)

I am writing to advise you that the 2014-15 Federal Budget continues the provision of additional funding to the MHNIP to ensure existing service levels can be maintained. In 2014-15 an additional $22 million will be provided to maintain MHNIP services at 2013-14 levels.

The additional funding for MHNIP ensures patients can continue to receive services under the programme while the National Mental Health Commission continues its work of reviewing existing mental health programmes across both government and non-government sectors. The Commission is due to provide its final report to the Government in November 2014. Further information about the work of the Commission is available at www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au.

Detailed below is information on the administrative arrangements that will be in place to maintain MHNIP services in 2014-15. Consistent with the current arrangements, organisations will be required to manage client services and sessions within a capped allocation.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is currently writing to all organisations to advise them of the arrangements for 2014-15. I have attached a copy of this letter for your information, and a copy of a Question and Answer sheet which provides further information on how sessions will be allocated.

DHS will write to existing organisations again in June 2014, to provide them with a 12 month allocation for 2014-15 based on the estimated number of sessions conducted in 2013-14 and paid by DHS. The 2014-15 session allocation for organisations will be calculated using available data on 2013-14 session usage and projected out to a full 12 month allocation.

Consistent with 2013-14 arrangements, organisations will have an opportunity to seek a review if their allocation for 2014-15 is less than their allocation for 2013-14 and/or circumstances impacted on their ability to utilise sessions throughout 2013-14.
Organisations are being encouraged to submit all claims for 2013-14 prior to 14 August 2014 to ensure that full year data can be utilised in the review process.

Information in relation to the Budget and administrative arrangements, including information on how the 2014-15 session allocations will be calculated, will also be available on the Department of Health website at the following address: http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/work-pr-mhnip and you may wish to provide this information to members.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Nicholls
Assistant Secretary
Mental Health Services Branch

14. May 2014
16 May 2014

Dear <Title> <Surname>

2014-15 Federal Budget - Mental Health Nurse Incentive Programme

I am writing to advise you that the 2014-15 Federal Budget continues the provision of additional funding to the Mental Health Nurse Incentive Programme (MHNIP) to ensure existing service levels can be maintained.

As you would be aware, the MHNIP provides funding for eligible organisations that engage mental health nurses to assist in the provision of coordinated clinical care for people with severe mental disorders.

In 2014-15 an additional $22 million will be provided to maintain MHNIP services at 2013-14 levels. Future arrangements will be considered in the context of the final report of the National Mental Health Commission's review of mental health programmes, which is due in November 2014.

2014-15 Session allocation
Your session allocation will be based on sessions conducted and paid in 2013-14 and will not exceed your current session allocation. If your 2014-15 allocation is less than your current allocation and you are able to demonstrate that circumstances impacted on your ability to use sessions in 2013-14, you will have an opportunity to seek a review.

I will write to you in June 2014 to provide you with your 2014-15 session allocation and more information on the review process.

What this means for you
Consistent with current arrangements, you will need to manage your client service levels within your 2014-15 session allocation.

I encourage you to submit any outstanding claims for 2013-14 before 14 August 2014, to ensure that data for the full year can be used in the review process.
More information
If you have any questions about how the Federal Budget announcement affects your organisation or how session allocations are calculated, go to our website humanservices.gov.au/healthprofessionals > Incentives and Allowances > MHNIP

Yours sincerely

National Manager
Health Support Programs Branch
Questions and Answers:

THE MENTAL HEALTH NURSE INCENTIVE PROGRAMME (MHNIP) AND MAINTENANCE OF SERVICE LEVELS IN 2014-15

Q. 1 As a registered organisation that provides MHNIP services, I need to know what service levels I need to maintain for 2014-15. When and how will I find out?
A. Registered organisations will need to maintain services in 2014-15 at 2013-14 levels. The Department of Human Services will write to existing organisations in the week commencing 16 June 2014 advising them of their session allocation for 2014-15.

Q. 2 How will a registered organisation’s service level be calculated?
A. 2014-15 session allocations will be based on organisation’s 2013-14 allocation, taking into account the number of 2013-14 sessions conducted and claimed, and which have been paid by the Department of Human Services. This will be calculated using available session data for the period 1 July 2013 to 28 February 2014 and paid up to 31 March 2014.

Where organisations fully or substantially utilised their 2013-14 allocation, they will be provided with the same allocation for 2014-15. Where organisations utilised less than their 2013-14 allocation, they will be provided with a session allocation for 2014-15 based on projected actual service levels in 2013-14.

Organisations that received a reduced allocation in 2014-15 are eligible to seek a review of their 2014-15 allocation. See Q.4 for information on the review process.

Q. 3 What if a registered organisation has queries about the level of service advised by the Department of Human Services?
A. If a registered organisation has queries about the advised service level, then the organisation may contact the Department of Human Services to discuss how the service level was calculated.

Q. 4 Can I seek a review of my 2014-15 session allocation?
A. Organisations that receive a reduced allocation in 2014-15 are eligible to seek a review of their 2014-15 allocation. Requests for review, outlining the circumstances that impacted on the organisation’s 2013-14 service levels, the number of additional sessions sought and evidence to support the request will be required to be submitted to the Department of Human Services by 31 July 2014.

Q. 5 How will a registered organisation’s service levels be monitored?
A. Noting that service levels are likely to fluctuate across the twelve month period, the Department of Human Services will monitor the level of service provision throughout 2014-15 and provide advice to registered organisations on their total service levels on a quarterly basis, or more regularly if required, to support them in maintaining services within their allocation.

Q. 6 What happens if I exceed my session allocation in 2014-15?
A. If you provide more sessions in 2014-15 than allocated by the Department of Human Services, you will not be paid for the additional sessions.

Q. 7 How long do I have to submit claims for payment?
While the period for submitting claims for payment has not changed, organisations are strongly encouraged to submit claims as soon as possible and within 60 days of the service being delivered.
The early submission of claims following the delivery of services will assist the Department of Human Services to monitor service levels in 2014-15 and provide up to date information to organisations on their session usage throughout the year.

**Q. 8 As a registered organisation, I wish to employ a new Mental Health Nurse in 2014-15. Is this possible?**

A. Yes, you may employ a new Mental Health Nurse, as long as overall services are maintained at the level for 2014-15 advised by the Department of Human Services.

**Q. 9 Is it possible for new patients to join the programme in 2014-15?**

A. Yes, as long as overall services for the registered organisation are maintained at the level advised for 2014-15 by the Department of Human Services.

**Q. 10 What if a registered organisation hasn’t been providing services?**

A. The Department of Human Services will be monitoring service levels throughout 2014-15 and end-dating inactive organisations. This may enable new eligible organisations to join the MHNIP, or existing organisations to increase service delivery, so that service levels are maintained.

The Department of Human Services will communicate with those registered organisations that have not submitted claims for services in the previous quarter to confirm that they wish to remain in the programme.

Where a registered organisation indicates that they no longer wish to provide services under the programme, or does not respond, the Department of Human Services will deregister (end-date) the organisation. A registered organisation that has been end-dated would need to reapply to the programme in order to be able to participate in the future.

Some registered organisations may have provided services in the previous quarter but not yet submitted claims for payment. In this case, organisations will need to contact the Department of Human Services to confirm that they are providing services.

Any organisation that was registered to provide services but did not do so in the 2013-14 financial year, has been end-dated. Should these organisations wish to re-join the programme in 2014-15 they will need to join a waiting list of eligible organisations (see Q.11).

**Q. 11 I wish to register as an eligible organisation to provide MHNIP services. Can I still join?**

A. In 2014-15 the Department of Human Services will continue to maintain a waiting list to manage the reallocation of sessions should these become available. In addition to the criteria outlined in the MHNIP Guidelines for eligible existing and new organisations, the following criteria will also be applied to the reallocation process:

- Ensuring continuity of care to existing patients;
- Availability of MHNIP services in the local region; and
- Availability of programme funding.

Where there is opportunity to reallocate sessions, priority will be given to organisations in areas with limited or no MHNIP services, to improve the equitable distribution of services across geographic locations.

**Q. 12 What does this Budget measure intend to do and why?**

A. Additional funding of $22 million has been allocated to the MHNIP in 2014-15 to ensure people with a severe mental illness can continue to receive coordinated clinical care services while the
Australian Government awaits the outcome of the National Mental Health Commission’s review of mental health programmes.

This additional funding will make sure existing eligible organisations and nurses can maintain client service levels, and continue to make claims to Medicare so patients receive the care they need. Organisations can continue to accept new patients into the programme and engage new nurses, as long as the overall service levels of the organisation are maintained.

Q.13 What is the National Mental Health Commission’s review of mental health programmes?

The Australian Government recognises that mental health is important for the Australian community and is committed to ensuring that mental health services are delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible. It has tasked the National Mental Health Commission to assess the effectiveness of all existing mental health programmes across the government, non-government and private sectors. This process will ensure services are being properly targeted at patients, are not being duplicated, and are not being unnecessarily burdened by red tape. It will also identify any obvious service gaps, in both mental health research and workforce development.

The Commission's deliberations and its final report will inform the Government’s future decisions on mental health, including funding arrangements.

Q. 14 What is the response to the findings of the MHNIP evaluation?

A. The MHNIP evaluation was conducted during 2012 and the final report released on the Department of Health and Ageing website on 24 December 2012.

The evaluation findings and options to redesign the MHNIP will be considered in the context of the National Mental Health Commission’s review of mental health programmes.

I have more queries or need more assistance.

For more information on how these arrangements will apply, including how your 2014-15 session levels have been calculated, you may wish to contact the Department of Human Services on 1800 222 032 (call charges may apply) between 8.30 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday, Australian Central Standard Time.