MEDIA RELEASE

Nurses play a key role in mental health reform

The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) is keen to work with the Government and Primary Health Networks on the roll out of the mental health reform package outlined by the Federal Health Minister this morning.

“We welcome the commitment to tailored and integrated mental health care, and we are pleased to see a focus on solutions for consumers” said Adjunct Associate Professor Kim Ryan, CEO of the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses.

“Mental health nurses play a vital role in providing care across the Australian health sector. The Minister has highlighted care in the community as a primary part of this reform package, and one of the key elements of community care is the Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program (MHNIP).

“MHNIP is a successful and cost-effective program delivering services to consumers across the country. The ongoing commitment to MHNIP recognises the value of this program and I look forward to working with the Department of Health and the Primary Health Networks to embed MHNIP in the new structure.

“We will be discussing the changes and their impact on mental health nurses with the Department over the next few days” said Adjunct Associate Professor Ryan.

In the press conference this morning it was noted by National Mental Health Commissioner Professor Ian Hickie that this package involves wide-ranging structural reform, and as such the changes will be ‘disruptive’ to services.

“I urge the Minister and the Department to consult in a timely and thorough way with stakeholders to ensure that the disruption is minimal, and to ensure that the health workforce, including nurses, is actively involved in the implementation and evaluation of these reforms” Adjunct Associate Professor Ryan said.

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