

Friday, 1 September 2017

Mental health nurses offer no-cost clinical care coordination

Official launch of Mental Health Nursing in Brisbane North Program

Enhanced clinical care coordination is now available to support general practitioners and community-based psychiatrists who care for adults with severe mental illness and complex health issues in Brisbane North.

The Mental Health Nursing in Brisbane North (MHNiB) program provides mental health nursing services at no cost to medical professionals who refer their patients into the program.

The mental health nurses work in collaboration with the patient's GP or psychiatrist to deliver better health outcomes and an improved healthcare experience.

Following a review of Australian Government-funded mental health nursing services, Brisbane North PHN has directed new and existing funding to three MHNiB providers:

- Morayfield Psychology Centre: servicing the Moreton Bay North and Redcliffe regions.
- Footprints: servicing the Moreton Bay South/North Lakes and Brisbane North regions, and
- Toowong Private Hospital: servicing the Brisbane Inner City and Brisbane West regions.

All three providers will attend the launch of the MHNiB program at Toowong Private Hospital on Friday, 1 September 2017, along with the Member for Ryan, and Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services, the Hon Jane Prentice MP.

Assistant Minister Prentice said the MHNiB program would receive close to \$1.5 million in Commonwealth funding in 2017/18 to provide care for some of society's most vulnerable people.

"The Turnbull Government is committed to a more efficient, integrated and sustainable mental health system," Assistant Minister Prentice said.

"I commend Brisbane North PHN and the mental health nursing providers involved in this program for the valuable clinical care coordination services they afford to GPs and community-based psychiatrists," she said.

Brisbane North PHN Chief Executive Abbe Anderson said the MHNiB program was part of an expanded range of mental health, suicide prevention, and alcohol and other drug treatment services the PHN is commissioning across North Brisbane and the Moreton Bay region.

"The three mental health nursing providers we've selected to deliver the MHNiB program will ensure more equitable geographical distribution of clinical care coordination services," Ms Anderson said.

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Morayfield Psychology Centre Director Amy Wong said the MHNiB program was helping to address significant service gaps in the Moreton Bay North region.

“Participating in this program fulfils our mission to provide accessible and affordable mental health services to individuals and families regardless of financial or socio-economic status,” Ms Wong said.

Footprints Mental Health Services Manager Keryn Fenton said the MHNiB program had resolved pre-existing issues regarding inconsistencies in mental health nurse functions and duplication of services.

“Efficient delivery of clinical care coordination services is absolutely essential when supporting people with mental illness, many of whom may be socially isolated and financially disadvantaged,” Ms Fenton said.

Toowong Private Hospital CEO, Christine Gee said that being part of the MHNiB was an excellent demonstration of public and private sectors working in partnership to deliver enhanced community mental health services.

“This project is a perfect example of not just public and private sectors working together, but also of how hospital and community based services can learn from each other and collaborate to develop and deliver much needed mental health care coordination services to support patients and their treating general practitioners and psychiatrists,” she said.

“This program is a tangible example of what is possible when existing barriers are challenged and overcome to enable services to be delivered when and where they are needed by the patient,” Christine Gee said.

For more information about PHN-funded mental health services in North Brisbane, go to <http://www.brisbanenorthphn.org.au/page/health-professionals/mental-health-services/>.

ENDS

Editor's note:

The official launch of the MHNiB program will be hosted at Toowong Private Hospital, from 12.30pm on Friday, 1 September 2017. Media wishing to attend this event can contact Simon Brooks on 0481 009 021.

About Brisbane North PHN

Brisbane North PHN is one of 31 Primary Health Networks nationwide and supports clinicians and communities within North Brisbane, Moreton Bay and parts of the Somerset region. The PHN covers approximately 4,100 km² of urban, regional and rural areas, with a population of over 900,000.

The key objectives of the PHN are:

- increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes, and
- improving coordination of care to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

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