

TOPIC #1 - New Mental Health Service

DETAILS

CAC feedback was sought about the design of a new mental health service.

DISCUSSION

The key themes that CAC members felt should be considered for the future development of the potential mental health service were:

- **Access and Transition:** Offer initial assessments and triage for all ages, ensuring smooth transitions to programs and services, and providing easy access to information and support. No one should be turned away, instead they should be referred to the most appropriate service (which may include the Crisis Stabilisation Unit at Robina Hospital via Qld Police or Ambulance).
- **Warm Transfer and Continuity of Care:** Referrals through the mental health system require a warm transfer via a personal introduction from the service to appropriate provider, so consumers do not have to navigate the system alone. This should include follow up with GPs, and other clinicians for continuity of care.
- **Sensitive and Holistic Care:** The environment should be welcoming (rather than clinical), with understanding staff who provide clear details about procedures and expectations (including payment or bulkbilling) and immediate access to the appropriate person to help them.
- **Access for People Without a Medicare Card:** Clearly communicate that the service is available to everyone, regardless of Medicare status.

CAC members also mentioned that they would benefit from an extended number of sessions permitted under a mental health plan, before needing a return GP visit and cap out-of-pocket expenses to aid low-income earners.

“There needs to be support and education for families as well as patients”

NEXT STEPS

Feedback from this meeting will be collated as part of the consultation for the design of this new service. CAC will be updated as the process develops.

“People are already feeling overwhelmed. Navigating care adds to the overwhelming situation. Someone to assist with identifying the most appropriate service, navigation and access to the services, with a warm transfer can lead to better patient outcomes.”



TOPIC #2 - Compassionate Communities

DETAILS

100%

of CAC members said there is a need for Compassionate Communities on the Gold Coast

Harpreet Kalsi-Smith from the Kindness Company introduced the concept of Compassionate Communities, a model designed to support community-based care for individuals experiencing life-limiting illness, palliative care, chronic disability, grief and loss. This approach leverages connections among community entities like organisations, schools, workplaces, and service providers to foster holistic support.

Key Elements of Compassionate Communities:

- Fostering Social Connectedness
- Building networks that encourage meaningful interactions and mutual care.
- Creating Dialogue Spaces and offering opportunities to discuss illness, death, and grief openly.
- Encouraging a culture where seeking and offering help is accepted and valued.

Gold Coast Health (GCH) is supporting the Kindness Company to explore how to implement and sustain Compassionate Communities as a public health intervention across the Gold Coast region.

Gold Coast Primary Health Network (GCPHN) met with the Kindness Company and Gold Coast Health to scope key stakeholders and further develop this community-focused initiative.

DISCUSSION

CAC members agreed there is a need for a Compassionate Community in the Gold Coast, with key challenges being social isolation, overwhelmed health services, and long ACAT wait times.

Members proposed the following solutions:

- Develop a Compassionate Community framework to identify project scope, lead and partner agencies, stakeholders, implementation and sustainability.
- For ease of implementation, consider segmenting the Gold Coast into regions.
- Include Compassionate Community teams in Care Plans as well as utilising a team of community volunteers, other aged care services, transport providers and peer support to help normalise discussions.
- Connect with people experiencing a life limiting illness using social media, to establish a referral network and integrate with existing communities.

NEXT STEPS

The Kindness Company will produce a scoping report for GCH. GCPHN will update CAC if GCH proceeds with the project.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

UCC OXFORD

GCPHN CEO provided an update on the Urgent Care Clinic (UCC) Oxenford and Southport. CAC members shared their experience at the UCC Oxenford. Members told us that a review of the triage process would be beneficial to patients. This information was passed on to the clinic.

MEDICARE REBATES

After seeing a social media ad, a CAC member raised the Medicare processes when a child turns fourteen including the need for a bank account for Medicare rebates. CAC members directed for more information to: [Services Australia – What happens when your child turns 14.](#)