

### Key Message

Mental health service contact type and duration is defined from a client perspective and is not intended to account for clinician time.

A mental health community contact is also defined from the perspective of the recipient, that is the external service provider or community group.

### Purpose

To clarify the reporting requirements and improve the consistency and quality of data submitted to the Client Management Interface/Operational Data Store (CMI/ODS) in relation to contacts.

### Background

CMI/ODS is the Victorian public mental health client information management system and comprises:

- Client Management Interface (CMI). The CMI is the local client information system used by each public mental health service
- Operational Data Store (ODS). The ODS manages a set of select data items from each CMI and is used to:
  - allocate a unique (mental health) registration number for each client, known as the statewide unit record (UR) number
  - share select client-level data between Victorian public area mental health services (AMHS) to support continuity of treatment and care
  - ensure the legal basis for providing treatment is evident to all public mental health service providers where a client may be unable or unwilling to consent to treatment
  - meet the various reporting requirements of the Department of Health
  - support the statutory functions of the Chief Psychiatrist and the Mental Health Review Board.

### Contact definition

A Service contact is 'a contact between a patient/client and an ambulatory care health unit (including outpatient and community mental health units) that results in a dated entry being made in the patient/client record (or would have required a dated entry in the clinical record of the patient/client had that patient/client already been registered)'.

Service contacts may be differentiated from administrative and other types of contacts by the need to record data in the client record. However, there may be instances where notes are made in the client record that has not been prompted by a service contact with a patient/client (for example, noting receipt of test results that require no further action). These instances would not be regarded as a service contact.

It is acknowledged that the definition is not able to measure case complexity or level of resource usage with each service contact alone.

## Service contact for one person

*'A service contact can include either face-to-face, telephone or video link service delivery modes. Service contacts would either be with a client, carer or family member or another professional or mental health worker involved in providing care and do not include contacts of an administrative nature (for example, telephone contact to schedule an appointment) except where a matter would need to be noted on a patient's record.'*

## Group contacts

*'A service contact is regarded to be provided as a group session where two or more patients/clients are present at the service contact with or without their carer(s)/relative(s) and the service contact is noted in their medical records.*

*A service contact is also regarded to be a group session where the carer(s)/relative(s) of two or more patients/clients are present at the service contact without the respective patients/clients and service contact is noted in the patient's/client's individual record'.*

Where more than one staff member participates in a group activity, the service contact is recorded by only one nominated staff member. The other staff participation is noted in the number of service providers.

## Community contact definition

Community contacts are provided by mental health services to community organisations or external service providers. The focus of the service is the external service provider, group or organisation rather than the individual client or client group.

## Data elements

Detailed definitions, business rules and code sets relating to program maintenance are available from [www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/pmc/data-definitions.pdf](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/pmc/data-definitions.pdf)

These include:

- contact type
- community contact type
- contact date
- contact duration
- service medium
- number of HCPs
- service recipient.

## Timeliness of data entry

All contacts are due by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the following month.

## About management circulars

The information provided in this circular is intended as general information and not as legal advice. Mental health service management should ensure that policies and procedures are developed and implemented to enable staff to collect and use health information in accordance with relevant legislation.

## Acknowledgements

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