



AGGRESSION PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT SAFETY DEVELOPMENT FUND – PROJECT BRIEF

In December 2004, Melbourne Health (MHS), in partnership with Northeast Health Wangaratta (NHW), signed a Safety Development Fund (SDF) agreement with the Victorian WorkCover Authority for a three-year project to address the increasing incidence and impact of occupational violence in the health sector workforce. The initiation of this project was strongly supported at an industry level with written endorsement from key employer/employee organisations and other Victorian health services.

As aggression related injuries in our industry are increasing at an alarming rate and ad-hoc clinical management of aggression continues to pose risks for patients, staff and the community, the objective is to develop a practical and integrated industry-wide approach. Not only has the number of incidents increased but also the severity, leading to profound traumatic effects on staff and the community. The failure to report many incidents adds to the difficulty in estimating incidence. A widely accepted estimate is that something like 80% of incidents go unrecorded; and that staff culture as well as uncoordinated reporting systems contribute to “under-reporting”.

The Project will primarily focus on the prevention of “client initiated” aggression with protection and treatment perspectives being included in a multifaceted organisation-wide approach. The prevention and management of “internal” violence and bullying in the workplace is also included within the scope of the Project. Desired outcomes include the following:

- To develop a best practice approach using industry experience and practice-oriented research;
- For MH and NHW to ‘champion’ a multifaceted organisation wide approach incorporating policy, practice, training/education, workplace design and evaluation components;
- To enable the transfer of systems, policies and practices which can be adapted by other health services and organisations through specific advisory and consultancy services;
- To promote initiatives across other health services through the project management framework;
- To share knowledge, systems and practices through existing networks and forums established by health services and by DHS, including the OHS Industry Group; and,
- To adopt relevant best practice aggression prevention and management strategies from current practice in Victoria, nationally and internationally.

Two Project Officers have been appointed (1.0 EFT @ MH, 0.5 EFT @ NHW) and commenced duty in April and May 2005 respectively. An Industry Reference Group with representatives from MH, NHW, VWA, DHS, Unions, Employer Organisations, Health Services from across the State, Victoria Police and Ambulance Services will be established in June.

The Project will be evaluated by an external team of evaluators from the School of Rural Health, University of Melbourne, headed by Professor Teng Liaw.

If you have any questions regarding the SDF Project, please contact us.

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