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| Bulletin #36 Mental Health Advice and Response Service (MHARS) |
| Mental Health & Drugs Data Unit |

Recording Mental Health Advice and Response Service (MHARS) activity

MHARS Service overview

The Mental Health Advice and Response Service (MHARS) is part of the Forensic Mental Health Implementation Plan (FMHIP). It provides clinical mental health advice within court settings to reduce delays in proceedings and to improve the appropriateness of mental health interventions and referrals for people appearing before the court. It capitalises on valuable opportunities for intervention and breaking the cycle of poor mental health associated with offending.

The program enables clinical services to intervene earlier in the criminal justice process by identifying where individuals charged with an offence and appearing before the court have a mental illness, and by providing timely advice and linkage with treatment providers. Where needed, immediate psychiatric intervention is provided, and referral made to appropriate mental health services. Priority is given to people presenting to the court in mental health crisis.

Specialist clinical mental health advice is provided to magistrates, Community Correctional Services (CCS) and accused persons to ensure effective assessment, treatment and management, and that court processes are applied while accounting for community safety and the mental health needs of the individual. Under MHARS, both functions are delivered by all clinicians as a combined service, employed by Forensicare and Area Mental Health Services (AMHS). Delivery is across 13 Magistrates’ Courts as follows:

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| Forensicare  |
| Melbourne | Broadmeadows | Heidelberg |
| Sunshine | Dandenong | Frankston |
| Ringwood | Moorabbin Justice Centre |  |
| AMHS |
| Geelong | Ballarat | Bendigo |
| Shepparton | Latrobe Valley |  |

In addition to the 13 Magistrates Courts above, a further two MHARS programs will be delivered as follows:

* by Melbourne Health (Orygen Youth Health) for the Children’s Court of Victoria;
* by Forensicare for the Bail and Remand Court at the Melbourne Magistrates’ Court.

## MHARS Subcentre/Program setup

A subcentre is required for each court in which the mental health service provides a MHARS service. This should be listed within the Subcentre name, for example, “MHARS – Geelong Magistrates Court”.

Table 1. Subcentre Maintenance

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| Subcentre Name | Subcentre Type | OM Setting | Caseload |
| “MHARS” – “Court Name” | Community | Adult – Not applicable | Not required |

Table 2. Program Maintenance

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Program Classification | Program Type | Program Description | Fund Source | Target Population |
| Community | Comm, Consultation and Liaison – MHARS | Service discretion  | Adult Continuing Care | Forensic – General |

## Data reporting

Triage Minimum Data Set (TMDS)

As agreed by the MHARS Implementation Working Group, MHARS activity is to be included within the Triage Minimum Data Set submissions from 01/07/2019.

All MHARS activity within TMDS is to be reported against the program type “CL5”, which is “Comm, MHARS Consultation and Liaison – Adult”.

For further technical information relating to the Triage Minimum Data Set, including submission timeframes, please refer to the Triage Minimum Data Set manual.

Client Management Interface/Operational Data Store (CMI/ODS)

Contact reporting – Where MHARS activity meets reportable contact criteria requirements, this should be reported in the CMI/ODS. This is inclusive of client assessment activity, and MHARS Community tertiary consultation activity such as consultation and education to CCS, magistrates and users of the court (including legal representatives) on mental health services and mental health issues, and which do not relate to the assessment of a client.

CMI/ODS Client registration – MHARS is not required to register clients on CMI/ODS, as it is an assessment service.

Forensic Data set changes

The following codes have been added to CMI/ODS and TMDS to support the Forensic Mental Health Implementation Plan, these new data categories are relevant to MHARS.

Five new Referral Source codes:

* (51) Courts
* (52) Custodial Health Service
* (53) Court Integrated Services Program (CISP)
* (54) Legal Representative
* (55) Prison Mental Health Service

Four new Service Recipient codes:

* (105) Magistrate
* (107) CCS/Court Assessment & Prosecution Services (CAPS)
* (108) Koori Court Officer
* (109) Youth Justice Court Advice Service (YJCAS)

Five new Service Response codes:

* (51) Prison Mental Health Service
* (52) Custodial Health Service
* (53) Court Integrated Services Program (CISP)
* (54) Legal Representative
* (55) Courts

For more information:

Further information about mental health service data reporting requirements, including contact reporting, and CMI/ODS client registration requirements, is available here: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health/research-and-reporting/reporting-requirements-for-clinical%20mental-health-services>

For further information relating to MHARS, please refer to the Mental Health Advice and Response Service – Service Guidelines.

Any further information Please email: MHDReporting@health.vic.gov.au

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