

Priority Action Area 1: Mental Health and Wellbeing

Initiative 1.1: Gender sensitivity and safety in adult acute mental health inpatient units

To investigate issues related to gender sensitivity and safety in adult acute inpatient units.

Progress and Achievements:

Literature and policy reviews, interviews with key stakeholders and inpatient service visit audits have been completed. Approaching completion of written report with recommendations to senior management in the Mental Health and Drugs Division. See also Key successes.

Initiative 1.2: Inpatient Environmental Improvement Grants

Once off funding supports environmental alterations to adult acute inpatient units. These will enhance safety and contribute to the sense of security women consumers of mental health services need.

Progress and Achievements:

All Mental Health Inpatient Services have consulted consumers and utilised the \$20,000 in grants to improve inpatient units to address some of the safety and security concerns of women. See also Key successes.

Initiative 1.3: Postnatal Depression: Mercy Hospital for Women

To expand obstetric liaison and outpatient services for those women at high risk for pregnancy complications and psychiatric disorder.

Progress and Achievements:

Psychiatric liaison service to the Neonatal Intensive Care Nursery and Special Care Unit includes attendance at weekly ward rounds. Supervision support in place for staff of the Transitions Clinic.

Initiative 1.4: Postnatal Depression: Mother/Baby mental health services

To support maternal and child health (MCH) services to work with mothers

with postnatal depression (PND), their infants and families.

Progress and Achievements:

Training programs for MCH in varying stages of preparation and commencement. MCH service staff have developed direct relationships with specialist mental health Mother/Baby services staff and gained increased access to training and support to work with women experiencing PND.

Initiative 1.5: Royal Women's Hospital, Mental Health Consultation and Liaison

To expand consultation and liaison beyond inpatient maternity services to include service provision to high risk groups.

Progress and Achievements:

An after hours psychiatry consultation service has been established with a consultant "on call" to provide advice and support to RWH staff 7 days a week. A consultant psychiatrist and registrar are now part of the Women's Alcohol and Drug Service multi disciplinary team.

A consultant psychiatrist now attends the "Young Mums" Clinic providing assessments, management of referred patients and secondary consultation to other health professionals involved in the young women's care.

Formal psychiatric support to the Aboriginal Women's Health Business Unit began in February 2007 with a focus on Aboriginal women presenting to the RWH with acute psychiatric issues.

Initiative 1.6: Southern Health Eating Disorders Day Program Pilot

To improve responses to young people with eating disorders.

Progress and Achievements:

This specialised eating disorders day program is operating well, handling enquiries and admitting clients. A formal review of the model's effectiveness will

be undertaken in the second half of 2008.

Initiative 1.7: Families Where a Parent Has a Mental Illness (FaPMI) – a service development strategy

To reduce the impact of parental mental illness on all family members through timely, coordinated, preventative and supportive action.

Progress and Achievements:

The Bouverie Centre has been funded to lead and coordinate the strategy's implementation and has appointed a Statewide Coordinator to undertake this work. Seven half time coordinators have been appointed in area mental health services across the state (5 rural & 2 metro).

Initiative 1.8: Community Health Counselling quality initiatives

To improve the quality of counselling in community health settings through the provision of professional development opportunities to practitioners.

Progress and Achievements:

The Bouverie Centre has completed *Family therapy skills training* attended by 187 counselling practitioners from 67 Community Health Services (CHS) and 8 one day refresher courses for experienced family therapists. Also 68 senior counselling practitioners received training to provide 'in house' clinical supervision to counselling practitioners in community health.

Initiative 1.9: Refugee Health Nurse Program

To provide timely access to a range of primary health services for newly arrived refugees settling in Victoria.

Progress and Achievements:

Operates across 9 CHS across Victoria. The evaluation of the first year of the model has provided clear evidence of the positive impact of the initiative, providing newly arrived refugee women and their families with culturally appropriate health services.

Initiative 1.10: Supporting Care Relationships for Older Victorians

To improve recognition of and support for care relationships for older Victorians through policy, service development and delivery.

Progress and Achievements:

Carers Victoria has been funded over four years for the development and delivery of carer capacity education and training programs and support for the networking of carers in local carer groups.

Well for Life for People in Care Relationships projects in Hume, Southern Metro, Barwon South Western, Eastern Metro and North and West Metro Regions have resulted in isolated carers participating in group nutritional and activity programs.

Funding has been provided to hospitals to develop carer friendly hospital environments.

The *Support for Carers Program* providing respite and support to older carers and the carers of older people has grown to \$13.4m recurrent funding.

A guide to living at home, and navigating and accessing services for older Victorians and their carers is currently being finalised.

A review of HACC social support and respite has begun to examine how well carer needs are met, and care relationships supported.

A Carers Charter is being developed recognising, respecting and supporting people in care relationships, and promoting their participation in care planning and management.

Initiative 1.11: Preventing Elder Abuse guide

A new guide will provide up to date guidance to staff in health, community and residential aged care services to more confidently address suspected and substantiated incidents of abuse.

Progress and Achievements:

The new guideline *With Respect to Age 2008* is due for release in June 2008.

Initiative 1.12: Signposts for Building Better Behaviour

Initiative transferred to Department of Education and Early Childhood Development following machinery of government changes in August 2007.

Initiative 1.13: Health Promotion Priorities: Mental Health and Wellbeing

Develop an Action Plan (as part of the implementation of statewide health promotion priorities for 2007-2012 to improve overall health and reduce health inequalities) with a focus on mental health and wellbeing.

Progress and Achievements:

Mental health promotion is a strategic direction in the broader Victorian Mental Health Reform program.

Initiative 1.14: Healthy Babies Healthy Pregnancies

To develop the *Healthy Babies Healthy Pregnancies* practical resource kit, for health workers in Aboriginal settings. The resource emphasises issues related to alcohol misuse/abuse. This program involves a whole of community approach to the development of healthy babies.

Progress and Achievements:

Resource kit completed. Regional launches, training sessions completed in Melbourne, Geelong and Bairnsdale.

Initiative 1.15: Parent Support Program

To improve the confidence of parents of drug users, and also to reduce parental stress, anxiety and guilt associated with a family member using drugs.

Progress and Achievements:

Continuing to provide parents with skills to help cope with their children's substance use.

Initiative 1.16: Family Counselling (Drug and Alcohol) program

To provide assistance, counselling and support to families with a family member affected by substance abuse. This assists to promote, maintain and strengthen their independence and wellbeing, as well as strengthen their capacity to support the family member affected by substance abuse.

Progress and Achievements:

Continuing to improve women's and families' capacity to support family members who use alcohol and other drugs.

Initiative 1.17: New Life Program (previously Women for Sobriety)

To support a self help group for women experiencing difficulties with alcohol and drug dependency. The program will focus on the underlying health and wellbeing issues contributing to alcohol and drug use.

Progress and Achievements:

Continuing to support women to abstain from alcohol and drugs, resulting in improved physical, social and emotional well being.

Initiative 1.18: Antenatal and Postnatal Support Services: Women's Alcohol and Drug Service, Royal Women's Hospital

To provide support and assistance for pregnant women with problematic drug and alcohol use.

Progress and Achievements:

Continuing to provide clinical services and advocacy for women requiring intensive antenatal care.

Initiative 1.19: Women's Alcohol and Drug Supported Accommodation

To help women recover and reintegrate into community living through supported accommodation services providing a drug free supportive environment.

Progress and Achievements:

Continuing to provide a stable residential environment for women to be drug free.

Initiative 1.20: Therapeutic Communities for Women - Salvation Army/Bridgehaven

To provide a stable residential environment for women (and their children), who are seeking to overcome alcohol and other drug dependencies.

Progress and Achievements:

Continuing to provide a therapeutic community residential service for women seeking to address their drug use.

Initiative 1.21: Therapeutic Communities for Women - Odyssey

To provide extra support to parents overcoming their addiction whilst simultaneously looking after dependent children.

Progress and Achievements:

Women are maintaining relationships with their children and partners whilst learning new skills in parenting and living without the use of substances.

Initiative 1.22: Odyssey and Women Offenders Project

To assist women in prison or in the community awaiting a court hearing, who are seeking a residential drug rehabilitation program.

Progress and Achievements:

Referral process between courts and Odyssey Victoria developed and implemented.

Initiative 1.23: Pandora's Box

To ensure that women with a disability who experience family violence have increased access to appropriate services.

Progress and Achievements:

Access audits of family violence services have commenced and will be completed by June 2008. Women's Health Goulburn North East have completed and updated the resource directory.

Initiative 1.24: Family Violence Learning Program

To establish a cross program and sectoral learning program.

This will provide workers in both the disability and family violence sectors with the skills to support women with a disability experiencing family violence.

Progress and Achievements:

Learning needs have been identified for the development of the learning program. Phase 1 rollout of the learning program has commenced in two pilot regions (Hume & Southern Metropolitan region). Initial evaluation of the program will commence in June 2008.

Initiative 1.25: Victorian Breast Prosthesis Subsidy Program

To provide a funding subsidy for eligible women who have had breast surgery.

Progress and Achievements:

Consumer satisfaction surveys undertaken by the service provider Southern Health indicate a high level of complete satisfaction with the program (88%). Since its establishment the program has reduced waiting times for prostheses, streamlined application and funding processes and acted as a resource for information provision regarding prosthesis and prosthesis subsidies.

Initiative 1.26: Ready Set Baby Program

To support service providers in Shire of Yarra Ranges in consulting with young pregnant and socially isolated women to identify issues and develop an antenatal resource for first time parents.

Progress and Achievements:

Eastern Health and Connections, a support agency for families and children, are currently adapting the Ready, Set Baby Manual for at risk groups. They plan to pilot the training mid 2008.

Initiative 1.27: Morphed

To provide rural women experiencing disadvantage due to geographic, social, economic or personal circumstances with the opportunity for social inclusion through participation in high quality community arts activities and public performance.

Progress and Achievements:

Over 140 participants from diverse communities were involved in workshops and performances, including production, scriptwriting, set making, acting and performing music. 1,500 people attended the community theatre performances and 1,000 secondary school students attended three schools performances. The project has increased social connectedness for participants, evidenced by weekly social group meetings, and a number of participants have joined local theatre groups. A project evaluation commenced in April 2008.

Initiative 1.28: Promoting Positive Body Image

To develop and deliver best practice body image sessions to year 7-9 girls in secondary schools across the South West sub region.

Progress and Achievements:

Body image sessions provided to schoolgirls in years 7-9. Two women's health workers have also attended *Bodythink* professional development training to run workshops in schools on request. Completion and launch of South West eating disorders service mapping.

Initiative 1.29: Mothers of Casey Alliance (MOCA)

To improve the mental health of mothers living in the City of Casey who may be at risk of post natal depression (PND).

Progress and Achievements:

Advocacy work undertaken by MOCA has resulted in Cardinia Casey Community Health Service developing a PND self help group. MOCA has provided input and consultancy into the City of Casey Playground Strategy Review. 320 people attended the 2007 *Casey Greatest Pram Stroll* organised by MOCA and the City of Casey.

Initiative 1.30: Peer Education, Gender and the Promotion of Mental Health through Freedom from Violence

To evaluate the Cardinia Casey Community *Health Making Changes* and *See Saw* programs.

Progress and Achievements:

Evaluation completed and available on request from Cardinia Casey Community Health Service. Peer education was established as an effective mechanism for engaging and empowering women. Some peer educators identified long term benefits of participating including a commitment to academic study, undertaking paid employment and engaging in new relationships.

Initiative 1.32: Family Violence School Based Project

To build the capacity of staff within East Gippsland secondary schools to respond effectively to the issue of family violence.

Progress and Achievements:

Meetings with school leadership and welfare staff have occurred with schools in Far East Gippsland, East Gippsland, Wellington and Latrobe. School welfare staff and other community based specialist services now work more closely. Gippsland Women's Health Service has developed a professional development package for secondary school. One school has progressed to review of policy/procedure relating to disclosures of violence.

Initiative 1.34: Integrated Family Violence

To undertake a new coordinated approach to addressing family violence.

Progress and Achievements:

Over 70 organisations, through 20 partnerships across Victoria, delivering a suite of family violence support services, women's and children's counselling and men's behaviour change programs.

In February 2008 the Children Youth & Family Services Division launched *Practice guidelines: Women & children's family violence counseling and support*

programs. These standards will guide quality practice and continuous improvement to ensure women and children receive the best support possible to rebuild and recover from the impact of family violence.

Victoria received an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant in 2007 to evaluate the family violence reforms in Victoria.

A Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Manual was launched in July 2007. Training around the use of the manual is planned to roll out across the state from June 2008.