

Recommendations

The MHC and the Department should:

1. Clarify their roles so that it is clear who is primarily responsible for the effective and efficient management of the mental health system.

MHC response: *Agreed. The Mental Health Commission (MHC) fully supports this recommendation. MHC and the Department of Health (DoH) have jointly developed and articulated roles and responsibilities, as set out in the Fact Sheet – Governance of Mental Health Services. In addition, the Head Agreement between the MHC and DoH sets out roles and responsibilities, as defined in the Health Services Act 2016. The MHC will continue to work with DoH to review the current articulation and communication of roles to ensure effective and efficient management of the mental health system.*

Implementation timeframe: Commence immediately and ongoing

2. Examine and analyse people's pathways across all State mental health services to better understand the capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of care options currently provided. Subsequently, this information should inform any reconfiguration of services and be used to prioritise the initiatives in the Better Choices. Better Lives: Western Australian Mental Health and Drug Services Plan.

MHC response: *Agreed. The MHC fully supports this recommendation. As a result of a new Data Memorandum of Understanding the MHC entered into with the DoH earlier this year, the MHC now has the ability to analyse people's pathways across specialised mental health wards, emergency departments and clinical community treatment services. Work has commenced on how this information will be used to support the planning, purchasing, monitoring and evaluation of these mental health services into the future.*

Implementation timeframe: Started and ongoing

3. Once the MHC and the Department have prioritised the initiatives in the Better Choices. Better Lives: Western Australian Mental Health and Drug Services Plan according to the needs of consumers; they should develop an implementation and funding plan to support it.

MHC response: *Noted. The MHC is developing a proposal that will identify priority areas required to further progress the implementation of the Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025.*

Implementation timeframe: Ongoing

Response from the Mental Health Commission

The Mental Health Commission (MHC) appreciates the work of the Office of the Auditor General for completing this review of Access to State-Managed Adult Mental Health Services. The MHC agrees and notes the findings and is committed to working with the Department of Health, Health Service Providers and other providers in the mental health system to address the recommendations.

The Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025 (The Plan) released in December 2015 was developed to guide investment decisions for the optimal mix and level of mental health, alcohol and other drug services required to meet the needs of Western Australians until the end of 2025.

The Plan brought together the views of government and non-government organisations, including consumers and carers, to outline a whole-of sector guide for investment. The MHC notes that this review covers only a portion of the mental health, alcohol and other drug (AOD) system, with the work of non-government organisations and AOD services not covered.

The MHC is currently developing a proposal for immediate investment towards the Plan for the consideration of Government and will develop further proposals for additional investment in the future. Actions that can be progressed by the MHC as part of normal business will continue to be initiated and completed. Projects already well underway include the MHC's establishment of step up/step down services, the Accommodation Strategy and Workforce Strategic Framework. These projects and additional work done by the MHC will provide a good foundation for additional investment and system improvements over the next six years.

The MHC acknowledges there remains important and valuable work to be done within the public health system to optimise patient flows and services for individuals. The MHC thanks the Office of the Auditor-General for their proof-of-concept work regarding patient pathways, a concept that had not been possible to date due to data accessibility. MHC looks forward to working collaboratively with the DoH to develop this concept further in partnership, so that planning and purchasing decisions can take into account the pathways and aggregate data of people using services in the public health system. Work has already commenced through a revised Data Memorandum of Understanding the MHC has entered into with the DoH in early 2019, that will facilitate the analysis of people's pathways across mental health services.