

GP Advisory Committee (GPAC) in Focus

Highlights – 17 July Meeting

Joint Regional Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Plan

Discussion led by Andrew Biddle, Senior Manager, Mental Health, Alcohol and other Drugs (NBMPHN) & Phillippa Venn-Brown, Manager, Strategic Office, Planning Directorate (NBMLHD)

The Fifth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan seeks to establish a national approach from 2017 to 2022 across eight targeted priority areas. For the first time the plan commits all governments to work together to achieve integration in planning and service delivery at a regional level. It also places consumers and carers central to the way in which services are planned, delivered and evaluated.

Member feedback highlighted preferences about the governance process and key issues affecting patients.

GP feedback included:

- Recruiting a psychiatrist as part of steering committee and/or working group membership
- Questions about the extent of financial stress affecting high rates of distress and suicide in the Nepean Blue Mountains region
- A high proportion of vulnerable people in our region (e.g. Aboriginal, CALD, homeless) tend not to have a regular GP who can advocate for their ongoing care.

Ideas to support GPs included:

- To seek extensive GP input and consultation into development of the plan
- That mental health patients are best supported by the multidisciplinary team with input coordinated by GPs
- For a review of GP mental health remuneration in response to possible disincentives to accept care of complex patients.