Mental Health Support for People in
Residential Aged Care Facilities
**Seeking Expressions of Interest from RACFs**

**Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network (NBMPHN) is seeking Expressions of Interest from RACFs in the Nepean Blue Mountains region to work with selected organisations or mental health clinicians to deliver treatment to residents experiencing mild to moderate mental health issues.**

**Background**

Mental health services are not routinely available to older people living in RACFs, and are not within scope of the personal care or accommodation services RACFs provide. There is evidence that RACF residents have very high rates of common mental illness. For example, it is estimated that approximately 39 percent of all permanent aged care residents are living with mild to moderate depression.

**About the program**

The Department of Health has provided funding to Wentworth Healthcare (provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network) to commission new mental health services for older people with mental illness who reside in RACFs in the Nepean Blue Mountains region. This is designed to address the current gap in services for this group of people and offer access to psychological services which are similar to those available to people with mental illness in the community under Medicare arrangements.

The service involves mental health professionals delivering evidence-based psychological therapies to residents identified as having mild to moderate mental health needs. The mental health professionals will also provide training to staff of each RACF to build their capacity to assist with better identification and referral of these residents.

Access to the new service require a diagnosis of a mental illness and a referral from either a GP or clinical nurse based at the participating RACFs. The service is intended to complement and integrate with, rather than substitute, existing services for older people with dementia and severe and complex psychiatric problems already available. Further details regarding intake, assessment and client management protocols are currently under development.

Phase 1 of the program commenced in February 2019, with support now being provided to residents in two participating RACFs, namely Uniting Springwood and Uniting Hawkesbury Richmond.

**Funding Implications**

There is no cost to RACFs in participating in this program. Staff training will be provided at no expense, however it is expected that RACFs will allow staff to attend workshops during normal employment hours.

**Benefits to the RACF**

There is no funding provided to RACFs to participate in the program, however the following advantages can be expected:

* Increased access for residents to mental health services, delivered in an appropriate service model for older people
* Increased overall mental well-being for residents
* Training for staff to increase awareness and understanding of mental health in aged care
* Increased staff ability to identify and support residents with mental health needs
* Improved capacity of staff to make referrals to appropriate professionals

**Eligibility & requirements**

* Residential Aged Care Facility located in the Nepean Blue Mountains region
* Dedication to improving the mental health of elderly residents
* Available and suitable space for therapy to be delivered
* Access to clinical staff (such as registered nurse, general practitioner, psychiatrist or psychologist) who can confirm a diagnosis of mental illness or reliably identify individuals who would benefit from these services
* Commitment to participate, for example:
	+ Staff available to attend training and workshops
	+ Ability to identify and refer appropriate residents
	+ Assistance available to support residents to attend appointments
	+ Staff commitment to work with mental health professionals to improve mental health care of residents
	+ Access to information about patient history relevant to mental health treatment (including status of medications).

**How to Apply**

If your RACF is interested in participating in this program, please complete the attached form and return by 9 July 2019 to Alana Campbell, Program Support Officer: Alana.Campbell@nbmphn.com.au.

For further information please contact Kieran Mahony, Manager Mental Health Reform, on (02) 4708 8111 or Kieran.Mahony@nbmphn.com.au

**Expression of Interest- Mental Health in Residential Aged Care Facilities**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **RACF name:** |  |  |  |
| **RACF address:** |  |  |  |
| **RACF phone:** |  |  |  |
| **Key contact for EOI:** | Name:Position: |  |  |
| **Email address:** |  |  |  |
| **Phone number:** |  |  |  |
| **Eligibility criteria:** | Residential Aged Care Facility in the NBMPHN region | Yes | No |
| Willing to work with NBMPHN & providers to improve the mental health of elderly residents | Yes | No |
| Available and suitable space room to deliver therapy | Yes | No |
| Able to make staff available to attend education | Yes | No |
| Able to assist in identification of appropriate residents | Yes | No |
| Staff commitment to work with mental health professionals to improve mental health care of residents | Yes | No |
| Access to health professional to assist in diagnosis of eligible participants | Yes | No |
| Able to provide access to information about patient history relevant to mental health treatment (including status of medications). | Yes | No |
| Will work with residents and service providers to facilitate participation | Yes | No |
| Other comments: |  |  |  |