



Improving Access to Primary Care and Mental Health Services An Integrated Framework

(May 2008)

Introduction

The Journey Forward is a plan that provides the vision and direction for mental health and addiction service development in our district. **Improving access to primary and secondary mental health** services is a priority of The Journey Forward programme.

Creating an environment where 'every door is the right door' is more likely to occur if services work together. The current system is made of many services whose focus may be on early intervention, prevention and or specialist assessment and treatment of mental health and addiction problems. These services are provided through Capital and Coast DHB clinical services, Primary Health Organisations and non government organisations.

An integrated services framework has been developed through research into service improvement in order to improve access to mental health support and treatment for the population covered by Capital and Coast District Health Board. A key role of this framework is to provide a structure in which organisations can work collaboratively.

The Integrated Services framework is designed to support the following objectives;

- Bring together current knowledge and emerging initiatives across the district to develop better access to services
- Enable capacity building, learning and continuous quality improvement across the mental health system
- Improve the flow for people between services to make the best use of all available resources and reduce unnecessary repetitive activities.

A main function of this system is to share innovative improvement ideas across the district and ensure continuous quality improvement.

The framework will allow for flexibility to meet the needs of diverse populations and the individual resources of each community. It acknowledges the work that is already and is continuing to occur within services across the sector.

There are two layers to the framework. The first layer consists of a **Collaborative group**

This cross sector governance group will;

- Form an information and data hub for service improvements across the district
- Support the development of cross sector relationships which will led to more effective treatment and support for people experiencing mental health problems
- Support local service solutions for local access issues by supporting the development and activity of Local Innovation Groups



A second layer of the framework is specifically designed to encourage and support local innovation and action to overcome local access issues. **Local Innovation Groups** are designed to encourage local solutions to local problems and recognise the diverse communities within the Capital and Coast District and to avoid a 'one size fits all' approach. These Local Innovation groups may form through the further development of existing networks and relationships.

Priority Populations

- Maori and Pacific People
- Children and Young people
- Refugee and Migrants
- People on low incomes
- People with mental health and physical health problems at the same time

How will we know it is working?

Ultimately people who experience mental health problems will have more timely access to treatment and support.

This will be achieved by;

- Better understanding of how people access services
- Quicker access to treatment and support, e.g least intervention first time (problems will not escalate)
- Sharing of information and resources between services through improved communication. and cooperation
- Opportunities for both physical and mental health needs to be met together

Next Steps

The next few months will see the establishment of the Collaborative group and more information will be developed and shared about Local Innovation groups. If you would like further information about the framework please do not hesitate to contact

journeyforward@kites.org.nz

A copy of the report called "Improving Mental Health Services – An Integrated the Capital and Coast District Health for download from the Capital and Coast website.



Access to Primary and Secondary Framework" that was presented to Board in December 2007 is available

Visit www.ccdhb.org.nz and click on the logo



Current initiatives to trial and support aspects of the framework

Two innovative projects to get the framework underway have been initiated. These are examples of how the framework will work to improve collaboration and access to services.

Link Worker

This position is designed to provide a key linkage between primary and secondary mental health services. A specific focus on improving access for Pacific people who are experiencing mental health problems will be explored. The focus and key aspects of the role will be defined through stakeholder involvement and feedback. A business case will be developed for approval including a job description. The role will be implemented, and outcomes will be evaluated to assess its effectiveness as an improving access initiative.

Physical health needs

The physical health of people who experience mental illness is worse than that of the general population and the potential adverse effects of medication can be overlooked. A small scale study was undertaken within secondary mental health services to trial a process of monitoring and communicating physical health needs between primary and secondary services. Based on this study it is recommended that;

- Systems are in place based on best practice to monitor and improve people's health in both primary and secondary care
- Priority be given to ensure sharing of people's physical health status and information through electronic recording (this is avoid people having to repeat themselves)
- A nurse in secondary mental health services is trained to take blood tests to allow greater flexibility of where blood tests are taken
- Routine monitoring of physical health in secondary services is improved
- Educational opportunities for people who experience mental illness are established to raise awareness of potential physical health needs, effects of medication etc

For a copy of the recommendations made to the Journey Forward Leadership group and the study results contact: journeyforward@kites.org.nz or Phone Kites on 04 384 3303

