

## Community Advisory Committee Activities 2020

The key topics, discussions and contributions of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) over 2020 are outlined below.

The year provided many challenges requiring community input and advice, most specifically relating to the bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic.

New members Mari Rosney and Bronwyn Reed were welcomed to the Committee.

There were six meetings for CAC originally scheduled for 2020, and due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, all meetings (expect the first meeting of the year) have been held via Zoom. The contribution by all members of CAC throughout the year has been greatly appreciated.

It is also acknowledged that Belinda Leonard as Chair of CAC also attended meetings of other Board Advisory Committees of Wentworth Healthcare during the year to provider CAC perspectives on topics of discussion.

The activities of CAC have been well supported by the Hawkesbury and Penrith Health Consumer working Groups, and both of these groups have welcomed new members in 2020.

### Covid-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 Pandemic was a significant issue for impacting the Health Sector during 2020.

The following outlines the key issues considered and identified by CAC over that time. These were in addition to general updates from the NBMLHD and Wentworth Healthcare, and the sharing of new information from the Ministry and the Department of Health.

- Extension of Contracts for GP Respiratory Clinics, these were supported by CAC members
- Concerns were expressed through the year about consistent messages to Community about COVID-19, including conflicting messages from the Commonwealth and State Governments
- Impact of isolation and physical distancing requirements was raised as a significant issue
- Concern for all involved in Newmarch House was shared
- Feedback on Telehealth was provided
- COVID-19 Testing, issues around community update were shared (e.g. stigma associated with positive tests, impact on employment etc.)
- Complacency regarding testing and paying attention to symptoms was raised as an issue. Members were asked to promote amongst their community connections the need to stay vigilant with testing when needed
- It was noted that vaccinations will be a key focus in 2021
- Positive feedback was provided about recent increases to Medicare funded psychological sessions
- Patient confusion of testing options

## **Health Literacy**

Health Literacy was identified in 2019 as a key area of interest for CAC.

As a result, Wentworth Healthcare have embarked on a Health Literacy Project and this was a topic of discussion and feedback at each CAC meeting in 2020.

CAC specifically provided feedback on possible Key Health Literacy themes, and opportunity to provide further input into the Health Literacy Statement which is a key component of the proposed strategy.

A draft Health Literacy Strategy was then prepared based on CAC's feedback, which the Committee have endorsed, and a working group made up of CAC members has been established to carry out the actions and tasks identified in the draft strategy.

It is anticipated that the Strategy will be formally launched in late 2021.

## **Collaborative Commissioning**

Updates were provided on the Collaborative Commissioning Model mandated by the NSW Ministry of Health, which is a joint process led by the NBMLHD.

A Project Control group is being established for this and consumer representative(s) were sought.

There is a specific project underway focusing on Community based Obesity and Diabetes Services and consumer representatives are also involved in this process.

## **NBMLHD Consumer Input**

Feedback was sought and provided on the draft 3 day Consumer Training Package designed by NBMLHD.

A New chairperson pack has been developed, and feedback was sought on this.

## **Other Matters**

The CAC also considered a range of other issues and topics which are outlined below;

- Feedback provided on the planned consultation for the Joint Regional Mental Health Suicide Prevention Plan, and the opportunity to provide comment on the final draft of the plan. It was noted there will be ongoing input from consumers over the next five years
- Members expressed support for ensuring changes to Health Systems support the strength of relationship between GPs and their patients
- CAC members were invited to meet with the Board of Wentworth Healthcare (via Zoom in 2020). This provided an opportunity to share ideas, to keep the Board abreast of CAC's intended activities, and for the Board to share its priorities
- The Committee was presented the updated Wentworth Healthcare Health Needs Assessment, and it was noted a full review is required in 2021
- Feedback was provided by CAC on a draft brochure "get to know Wentworth Healthcare" and changes incorporated into the final publication (<https://www.nbmphn.com.au/Resources/About/NBMPHN-Brochure>)

Discussion and feedback was provided on the issues of Health Complaints, Consumer Stories and Community feedback. This matter has been clarified and resources are being developed for Consumer representatives to distribute

An update on the Western Sydney City Deals was provided, noting a lot of work is happening to occur. The four key areas of focus are Livability and Connections, Getting people active, Access to health and wellbeing services (led by the PHNs) and Promoting healthy food and choice

## Administrative Matters

The following matters were considered in 2020;

- Drafting of an annual calendar of activities for CAC, to include the six joint priorities for integration approved by the NBMLHD and Wentworth Healthcare.
- Mental Health
- Transfer of Care
- Conjoint Care
- Health of the Community
- Priority Populations
- Collaborative Commissioning.
- Terms of Reference were updated
- Further progress was made on transitioning to a skills based membership of CAC, with the focus on members having strong community connections and alignment to Health Priority areas.

## Thank you and Acknowledgment of Health Professionals

The Committee expressed great appreciation to the work of all in the Health Industry, resulting in the Chair writing a letter of thanks to the CEO's of NBMLHD and Wentworth Healthcare.

The appreciation of CAC was captured by the following statement that has been shared with all Board Advisory Committees of Wentworth Healthcare

### We noticed.

We noticed how hard you worked during the emerging Covid-19 crisis. We noticed how you eased our confusion through up to date information knowing it might change within the hour. We noticed your calm, reassuring demeanour even though your inner turmoil must be roiling. We noticed how you clearly identified the unknowns and debunked the inaccuracies. We noticed your extra emphasis on our total well-being along with the immediate care needed. We noticed how you put your professional credibility on the line amidst the uncertainties. We noticed your pride in keeping the environment as safe as possible.

We noticed and we thank you.