

Case for change

- In the past year, **22%** of Australians experienced a mental health disorder.¹
- In NSW, **45%** of public mental health service users were new to the service.²
- The South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) population is projected to surpass 1 million by 2033, resulting in a **24–25%** rise in ED visits and hospital admissions.³

The SESLHD Mental Health Service (MHS) invested in the MH VCC to address this increased demand. Since launching in 2022, consumers have highlighted issues with the fragmented mental health system.

Feedback from a consumer accessing the MH VCC...

'I tried to get help for a while, but no-one did anything, it was a miracle that I even got help...'

I only wish I'd have gotten help sooner and things wouldn't have gotten this bad, I'd be able to leave my home and feel okay...'

<h3>Goal</h3> <p>Improve access to community mental health support for consumers discharged from SESLHD MH IPU by enhancing access to the MH VCC, to facilitate long-term personal recovery within the community by June 2025.</p>	<h3>Objective one</h3> <p>By June 2025, 40% of consumers referred to the MH VCC from SESLHD MH IPU will be discharged to external support and not represent to a SESLHD MHS IPU or emergency department within three months of discharge from MH VCC.</p>	<h3>Objective two</h3> <p>By June 2025, 60% of the total number of consumers who engage with the MH VCC and complete a RAS-DS, return an improvement in their "Master My Illness Domain" score, at the end of the phase of care.</p>	<h3>Method</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manual audit of the 28-day readmissions from Feb – May 2022 n = 123 Staff surveys: n = 54 Staff focus interviews: n = 4 Consumer focus interviews: n = 2 Solution workshops: n = 17 staff Consumer brainstorming: n = 3 Literature review Influence vs impact matrix: n = 10
--	---	--	---

The readmission audits told us...

43% of readmissions were within 7 days of discharge

56% of readmitted individuals were initially discharged to their GP

Consumers & staff report the main barriers are..

Stigma Cost Wait times

Difficult to navigate Inaccessible Unaccepted referrals

Diagnostics

How do the consumers feel?

"You're just trapped. Hopefully, you're not spiralling downwards. You know, you're just trying to stay above, you know, keep your head above water. That's all you can do and it feels like everyone is kind of against you"

Did you know?

- The approximate cost of a mental health readmission is an initial **\$2,000** and **\$1,400** per 24hours thereafter
- CMOs have a **2 – 9 month** wait time
- If not accepted by a **SESLHD CMHT** the recommendation is a **CMO** referral

Solutions

- QUICK WIN!** **MH VCC & PARC Partnership**
Increase the access to PARC for consumers without a CMHT through a partnership with the MH VCC
- Review MH VCC Framework**
VSASS & BARP collaboration that increases access to people at risk of a mental health readmission
- MH VCC eReferral**
Transition referral form to an eReferral in eMR with the consumer's goals as a mandatory field
- 28 REACT Report**
Data capturing activity to gain insights to the pre-readmission journey in the ambulatory setting

Results

- MH VCC eReferral** being built by ICT Team and the consumer's personal recovery goals has been made a mandatory field
- Revised MH VCC Frameworks** pending endorsement, key elements include MH IPU in reach, warm discharge planning with GPs and service collaborations
- Partnerships since implementation**
Alcohol & Other Drug Services
Prevention & Recovery Centre
Eating Disorders Team
GP CNCs
Peer Support Teams
Safehaven
- PARC + MH VCC Case Study**
47-year-old male
Challenges: Loss of father, social isolation, frequent alcohol use, struggling with living skills and physical health, leading to suicidal thoughts, plan and intention
Intervention: Limited community supports led to the consideration of a mental health admission. Instead, the PARC + MH VCC care package was offered to the consumer
Outcome: Maintained safety in the community, now discharged and under the care of his GP and CMOs, awaiting NDIS access
- Feedback: VSASS & BARP Partnership**
"I felt like I was able to trust [staff name] when I usually don't trust health services or any government services for that matter..."
- 33%** of total referrals accepted Jan – March 2024 were from a **MH IPU**
- Direct Referral Pathway with the AOD Service**

Sustaining change

- Expand eReferrals to additional SESLHD CMHTs
- Explore partnerships with services such as PHN and the Virtual Health Hub
- Present the project at the MOH Patient Flow Network
- Implementation and reporting on revised KPIs
- Complete MH VCC Service Evaluation

Lessons learnt

- Utilise effective communication for risk mitigation
- Think outside of the box to gain stakeholders engagement
- Leverage unique skills and relationships within the team
- Approach resistance with curiosity and collaboration
- Discuss project scope openly to identify and resolve bottlenecks

Acknowledgements

- Consumers who shared their stories and solutions
- MH VCC Staff
- Robin Ellis – Mental Health Director of Nursing (Executive Sponsor)
- Partnerships & Transitions Team
- Leonie Dunn – District Rehabilitation Coordinator
- Elfani Luhur – Performance Support Manager
- Laura Giblin: Clinical Redesign Coach
- Stephanie North – Service Development Manager
- Agency for Clinical Innovation

Acronyms

MHS – Mental Health Service
MH VCC – Mental Health Virtual Care Centre
MH IPU – Mental Health Inpatient Unit
CMHT – Community Mental Health Team
CMO – Community Managed Organisation
PARC – Prevention and Recovery Centre
PHN – Public Health Network
AOD – Alcohol and Other Drugs
VSASS – Virtual Short-Term Assessment & Support Service
BARP – Blended Adult Rehabilitation Program

Contact: Liana Lapuz – Project Lead
P: 0457 647 493
E: lianacarmen.lapuz@health.nsw.gov.au

References:
1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Prevalence and impact of mental illness. AIHW. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/mental-health/overview/prevalence-and-impact-of-mental-illness>
2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Mental Health. AIHW. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/mental-health>
3. South Eastern Sydney Local Health District. Health Plans. NSW Health. <https://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/about-us/health-plans>