

POSITION STATEMENT

Mental Health Services Reform

Statement

HCA advocates for a consumer-centred approach to mental health care. We want to see: more investment in preventing mental illness, early intervention, supporting recovery, keeping people well, and enabling them to lead 'contributing lives'.

Key points

Mental illness is common. Nationally, it is experienced by nearly half of all adults at some point. It is estimated that 7.3 million Australians aged 16 – 85 have an experience of mental illness. 75% of all cases of mental illness will occur by the time Australians reach 25 years-old. And yet, mental health services are underfunded – particularly prevention, early intervention, primary health and community services.

Reforms

The National Mental Health Commission describes the mental health system as 'poorly planned' and 'a massive drain on the wellbeing of people and families'. It has drawn up 25 recommendations to guide national mental health services reform.

Change is happening:

- The Australian Government has committed to moving towards person-centred, integrated mental health care based on localised decision-making. But - there's no new funding.
- Closer to home, the South Australian Mental Health Commission has been established to lead the development of SA's new five-year Mental Health Plan and drive ongoing reform towards more integrated mental health services.
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HCA's position

- Funding arrangements and accountabilities must improve; a collaborative approach between federal and state/territory governments, primary health and community services is needed.
- 'Consumer-centred care' must be made real. That means: engaging with consumers and carers, families, supporters and community services, to ensure the mental health system is designed with respect for a person's preferences, values and needs.
- There must be greater investment in prevention, early intervention, and services supporting recovery and maintaining wellness.

References and further information

Australian Government National Mental Health Commission, 2014. A Contributing Life: The 2014 National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

SA Mental Health Commission: www.samentalhealthcommission.com.au

National Mental Health Commission: www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au

Mental Health Coalition of SA: www.mhcsa.org.au

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