



Communiqué No 5: 29/30 September, 2014

The purpose of this brief Communiqué is to keep our members informed about the main discussions, deliberations and activities after each of our two face to face meeting of the National Committee. We hope that it give you some indication of our meeting discussions. We would be pleased to receive any comments you may wish to make about any of these issues at admin@pmhccn.com.au

The Network held its **thirtieth** on the **29-30 September, 2014** in Melbourne. Major items of discussion were:

We had two important guests attend our meeting. Ms Samantha Gavel (Private Health Insurance Ombudsman) joined our meeting on the Monday and Prof Allan Fels AO (Chair National Mental Health Commission) joint us on the Tuesday.

We had a wonderful opportunity of raising some important and relevant issues which affect privately insured members. We will be working closely with both Ms Gavel and Prof Fels in the coming months.

Survey of Members.

Some reports have arisen where privately insured consumers are pressured into being admitted to public hospitals under their private health insurance status. The National Committee has agreed to distribute a survey to members seeking their advices/experiences in this regard. The questions have been finalised and we will be seeking health insurer input.

Doctor/Consumer Confidentiality and third parties access.

Insurers and the courts are increasingly requiring access to a consumer's full health record and we have been concerned about this situation for some time. The Network will request the RANZCP Private Practitioners Network, the AMA Psychiatrists Group, the RACGP and the APS work together around this issue.

Patient/Consumer Centred Care.

This issue was raised by our NSW State Advisory Forum and we will be revising our Policy about Advance Directives and will develop an informal advance directive template as an addendum. This will be posted onto our website in the coming months.

Survey of Private Hospitals.

A scoping survey of private hospitals will be undertaken to gain some understanding of the participation which exists ie Consumer Carer Advisory Committees, Consumer/Carer Consultants.

Borderline Personality Disorder Research Paper.

Associate Professor Sharon Lawn (SA State Coordinator) has advised her Research Papers (One: Consumers Two: Carers) on the findings of the Network's two surveys in June 2011 have been

accepted for publication in the *Journal for Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*. Watch out for these publications!

Policy on Consumer and Carer workers and self-care.

We consider this is an important issue and we will be developing a policy in the coming months. We believe in the importance of self-reflection and the need for advocates to understand the need to care for themselves in their advocacy work and to have a better understanding of the context of the organisation they might be involved in.

Childhood trauma and Parents as Carers

Defining this issue is required and a national focus would be important. The Network will work with Kim Werner (ACT), Simone Allen (NSW State Coordinator), South Pacific Private Hospital and Assoc Professor Sharon Lawn (SA State Coordinator) to further revise the paper Sharon prepared for us.

Information Sheet on the Private Health Insurance Ombudsman (PHIO)

Following the visit of the PHIO Ms Gavel, the Network will develop an *Information Sheet* of the activities, contacts, and publications of the PHIO and post this on our website.

A Practical Guide for working with carers of people with a mental illness Project.

We are delighted that funding has been received from Mental Health Carers Arafmi WA and MIND Australia to undertake this 12 month national project in conjunction with our Network and Mental Health Australia. National consultations will occur across Australia. The Project Officer is Ms Judy Hardy and Mr Patrick Hardwick (WA State Coordinator) will chair both the Project control group and the Guidelines Development Committee. Look out for the consultations!

Development of on-line resources for consumer and carer workers/advocates.

This issue was raised by our Victorian State Advisory Forum and we will be developing a small range of PDF materials on various subjects to support workers in the private sector.

Standing Items

A number of standing items featured throughout the two days were around Risk Management, Budgets, State Advisory Forum reports, National Mental Health Consumer Carer Forum, National Consumer Carer Register, the Network Executives' Reports and the Network Work Plan 2013-2015.

Just remember: After the National Committee has endorsed the Minutes of this meeting in a few weeks, they will be posted onto our website of www.pmhccn.com.au where you can read the full content of the two days.