

Referrals to PHN-funded Primary Mental Health services

Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network (HNECC PHN) has commissioned a new access and referral service to improve and increase the levels of support for patients eligible to receive funded primary mental health care services.

The new access and referral service **will start from July 1, 2019** and will be provided by a consortium of locally-based and experienced primary care providers. In the Hunter and Mid-Coast regions this will be **Hunter Primary Care**. They will be coordinating the delivery of mental health services, including services to Residents in Aged Care Facilities and Clinical Care Co-ordination services in the Hunter and Mid-Coast. More information relating to these services will be sent to GPs by Hunter Primary Care in the next few weeks.

To ensure a smooth transition to this new service a list of FAQs is listed below.

Why has the referral system changed?

PHNs have adopted a stepped care approach to primary mental health services as part of the Australian Government's mental health reform agenda. Over the past year we have engaged in a co-design process to undertake this transition.

The new stepped care and triage model provides patients with a broader range of interventions based on their clinical presentation and need.

How do I refer my patients from July 1?

GPs in the Hunter and Mid-Coast can refer patients via fax to Hunter Primary Care on 02 4929 7072 or via gppsycho in the Medical Objects Referral Client online address book.

How will my referrals be managed?

All referred clients will be assessed daily by an experienced mental health team to determine the level of care. At times it may be required to contact the patient and/or GP to clarify referral information to ensure the patient is directed to the most appropriate care, particularly if there are risk issues identified.

How will the service be staffed?

Staff providing triage assessment and support will be local qualified mental health workers, supported by local senior clinical staff.

What will happen after my patient is assessed?

Depending on the level of care indicated by the assessment, patients will be referred to the most appropriate primary mental health service provider. You will be informed of the outcome and can review any decisions with the referral team.

Is there other assistance available to help manage patients?

Other assistance in managing patients is available by contacting the Hunter New England Local Health District Mental Health Line on **1800 011 511**. A free GP support line staffed by psychiatrists is also available Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm on **1800 16 17 18**.

For more information contact

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