



Mental Health Liaison Nurse Procedure

Effective: 12 December 2016

1. Service Description

The Great Southern Mental Health Service (GSMHS) provides a Mental Health Consultation and Liaison service to the Great Southern Region. This service is provided seven (7) days per week by or via the Clinical Nurse Specialist Mental Health Liaison Nurses (MHLN) based in the Emergency Department (ED) of the Albany Hospital from 08:00 to 22:30 hours daily.

A regional telephone support service is provided by the MHLNs to EDs and General Practitioners (GPs) in the Great Southern Mental Health Service catchment area.

MHLNs are available to undertake assessments and provide management advice to nursing and medical teams throughout the Albany Hospital regarding patients receiving medical or surgical care who have a co-morbid mental illness or who are experiencing symptoms of a psychiatric nature. A consultation service is available by telephone during business hours for patients in this cohort admitted to smaller regional hospitals.

It is important to note the MHLN service is a hospital based service and therefore not a crisis response team, but rather offers expert consultation and advice across the Great Southern region on matters pertaining to the assessment and treatment of mental illness, including advice in relation to the application of the *Mental Health Act 2014*.

The MHLN service is Activity Based Funded from Albany Hospital, and line managed by the Nurse Unit Manager, Acute Psychiatric Unit (APU).

2. Procedure During Mental Health Liaison Nursing Hours

08:00 to 22:30

(The last referral for in person Albany ED consultation is 2100 to allow finalisation of mandated paperwork. Telephone support is available regionally until 22:30.)

The MHLN can be contacted via the Albany Hospital reception by dialling "9" if the caller is within the Albany Hospital, or phoning 9892 2222 if the caller is from outside the hospital.

The MHLNs attend the daily 8am ED Clinical Handover meeting to monitor after hours mental health admissions and after hours ED Discharges requiring specialist mental health follow up.

Emergency Department (ED)

The MHLN service either in person or by telephone:

- provides information about short-term containment of patients who are experiencing psychiatric crisis or are severely psychologically distressed.
- conducts a Mental Health Assessment (in person or via video conference only)
- assesses risk to self and/or others (in person or via video conference only)
- is centrally involved in the initiation of referrals under the *Mental Health Act 2014*, decisions about patient disposition, and coordination of transfers in the Great Southern for patients under the *Mental Health Act 2014*
- If a metropolitan transfer is required for an inpatient mental health bed, this is negotiated by the MHLN through the state-wide bed management escalation pathway rather than the patient being transferred to Albany for admission to the APU (See [Admission of Mental Health Patients Procedure APU](#)).

If a management plan acceptable to the ED treating doctor cannot be reached after consultation with MHLN the matter is to be escalated to a Consultant Psychiatrist. If requested by the FACEM on duty, a consultant psychiatrist is to attend the Albany Hospital ED to assess the patient. This attendance is to be at the earliest possible opportunity. This is to occur regardless of the status of the patient under the *Mental Health Act 2014*.

Patients being held in the Albany Hospital Emergency Department on a Form 1A – Referral for Examination by Psychiatrist awaiting assessment in an authorised hospital - are to be seen daily by a Consultant Psychiatrist and the MHLN is to be centrally involved in their ongoing management. If the patient is located in a multi-purpose regional hospital, this assessment must be arranged via the MHLN and can be via video conference if appropriate and/or available, or transfer arranged to Albany Hospital for assessment either in ED or the APU.

A comprehensive MHLN assessment requires the use of the following documents:

1. An 8 page Mental Health Assessment form (SMHMR902).
2. Risk Assessment and Management Plan (SMHMR905) (RAMP) of the patient (including risks to self, risks to others and risks from others).
3. Initial management plan or ED discharge plan as appropriate.

CAMHS patients

- The MHLN provides a first level response to all ED requests for people of any age group presenting with psychiatric disturbance.
- The MHLN is to liaise with the CAMHS service during business hours when mental health specialist support is required for a child or adolescent. If required at the request of the MHLN the CAMHS team is to provide assessment in the ED at the earliest available opportunity.

- A specialist 24 hour Mental Health Liaison Service within Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) is available to provide secondary consultation to generalist health professionals in the assessment and management of children and adolescents experiencing acute psychiatric issues. The PMH service is Clinical Nurse Specialist led with back-up from CAMHS psychiatrist, phone **08 9340 8222**.

Patients admitted in Albany Hospital under the bed card of a physician / senior medical practitioner (SMP)

A MHLN consultation can be requested for patients of any age. The referring practitioner must discuss any referral with the patient prior to MHLN involvement being requested.

Any MHLN consultation is usually a one-off assessment. The MHLN is to document the assessment of the patient and recommendations for treatment/management in the patient's medical record. The MHLN is required to complete this documentation in both the patient hard copy file and PSOLIS. Recommendations may include regular review and involvement from the Mental Health team.

Patients admitted under a Psychiatrist in a non-Mental Health (outlying) ward

The MHLN is to be actively involved in the development of the nursing management plan and is involved daily in risk assessment and management of patients admitted under a consultant psychiatrist in an outlying bed.

3. Definitions

CL	Consultation Liaison
ED	Emergency Department
FACEM	Fellow of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine
MHLN	Clinical Nurse Specialist Mental Health Liaison Nurse

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Director of Medicine WACHS GS: To develop systems to ensure that all Visiting Medical Practitioner (VMP) GPs and SMPs are provided with an orientation to the mental health MHLN service.

Director of Nursing and Midwifery WACHS GS: To assist with the evaluation of the MHLN service and relationships with WACHS GS stakeholders receiving services.

Clinical Director and Manager GS Mental Health: To develop systems to ensure that MHLN and Consultant Psychiatry coverage is maintained, evaluated, governed and compliant with relevant legislation and procedures.

Clinical Director GS Mental Health: To provide overall clinical governance for the clinical services delivered by employees of the Great Southern Mental Health Service.

5. Compliance

It is a requirement of the WA Health [Code of Conduct](#) that employees “comply with all applicable WA Health policy frameworks.”

A breach of the Code may result in Improvement Action or Disciplinary Action in accordance with the WA Health [Misconduct Policy](#) or Breach of Discipline under Part 5 of the *Public Sector Management Act*.

WACHS staff are reminded that compliance with all policies is mandatory.

6. Evaluation

Monitoring of compliance with this document is to be carried out by the Nurse Unit Manager, Authorised Psychiatric Unit, in consultation with key internal stakeholders using audit tools developed by the GSMHS Management Committee in consultation with key internal stakeholders.

This procedure is to be reviewed at least every two years.

7. Standards

[National Safety and Quality Health Care Standards](#) - 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.2.1, 6.5.1, 9.1.2, 9.4.1, 9.5.1, 9.7.1, 9.9.1, 9.9.2)

[EQulPNational Standards](#) - 12.1.1, 12.1.2, 12.8.1, 12.8.2, 12.8.3, 12.9.1, 12.10.1)

[National Standards for Mental Health Services](#) 2010

[National Standards for Disability Services](#)

8. Legislation

[Mental Health Act, 2014](#)

9. References

[Clinicians Practice Guide to the MH Act 2014](#) Edition 3

10. Related Forms

1. An 8 page Mental Health Assessment form ([SMHMR902](#))
2. Risk Assessment and Management Plan (RAMP) ([SMHMR905](#))

11. Related Policy Documents

[Discharge from the Emergency Department of Patients with Mental Health Symptoms Procedure – Albany Hospital](#)

[WACHS Medical Practitioners Manual \(2012\)](#)

WACHS [Adult Psychiatric Inpatient Services: Referral, Admission, Assessment, Care and Treatment Policy](#) Version 3.00 (February 2016).

WACHS [Acute Response in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Policy](#)
[Patient Vehicle Access Procedure – Albany Hospital Mental Health Unit](#) (2014)

12. Related WA Health Policies

[Admission Readmission Discharge and Transfer Policy for WA Health Services \(2014\)](#)

[State-wide Guidelines for the Management of Under 18 year old Mental Health Patients in Non-child and Adolescent Mental Health \(CAMHS\) Emergency and Inpatient Settings.](#)

**This document can be made available in alternative formats
on request for a person with a disability**

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