



# Physical Health Care of Mental Health Consumers Policy

## 1. Purpose

Physical health assessment, care and ongoing monitoring involves collaboration and partnership between clinical staff, primary health providers, consumers, and their family, carers, and personal support persons. This collaborative partnership plays a critical role in improving physical health outcomes.

This policy provides direction to WA Country Health Service (WACHS) Mental Health Services to ensure high quality provision of physical health care to mental health consumers by outlining the standards required to deliver a consistent, coordinated approach.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- [Mental Health Act 2014](#) (WA)
- [Charter of Mental Health Care Principles](#)
- [Chief Psychiatrist's Standards for Clinical Care](#) - Standard: Physical Health Care of Mental Health Consumers
- MP 0155/21 [Statewide Standardised Clinical Documentation \(SSCD\) for Mental Health Services Policy](#)
- Department of Health [Guidelines for the Safe and Quality Use of Clozapine Therapy in the WA Health System](#)
- WACHS [Clinical Observations and Assessments Clinical Practice Standard \(physiological \(vital signs\), neurovascular, neurological and fluid balance\)](#)
- WACHS [High Risk Medications Procedure](#)
- WACHS [Medication Prescribing and Administration Policy](#):
- WACHS [Physical Health Care for Consumers within Mental Health Inpatient Units Procedure](#)
- WACHS [Physical Health Care for Mental Health Consumers within Community Services Procedure](#)
- WACHS [Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration \(RRAD\) Policy](#)
- WACHS [Specialised Medication Lithium Guideline](#)
- WACHS [Specialised Medication - Olanzapine Pamoate - Zyprexa Relprevv® Guideline](#)
- WACHS [Specialised Medication – Zuclopenthixol Acetate – Clopixol Acuphase® Guideline](#)

This policy is a mandatory requirement under the [Mental Health Act 2014](#) (WA) Schedule 1- Charter of Mental Health Care Principles and [Chief Psychiatrist's Standards for Authorisation of Hospitals under the Mental Health Act 2014](#).

This policy applies to all mental health consumers receiving care from a WACHS Mental Health Service, including Community Mental Health Services and Authorised Mental Health Units.

## 2. Policy

As per the [Mental Health Act 2014](#) (WA) Schedule 1- Charter of Mental Health Care Principles (Principle 8: Co-occurring needs), mental health services must address the physical, medical and dental health needs of people experiencing mental illness and other co-occurring health issues, including physical and intellectual disability and alcohol and other drug problems.

Mental health consumers have a right to physical, medical, and dental health care that is equal to the healthcare provided to the general population.

Physical health care is to be delivered in a respectful, non-judgemental and trauma-informed manner that considers dignity, privacy, gender, sexuality and the consumer's preferences in accordance with the [Charter of Mental Health Care Principles](#).

Consumers are to be provided with information regarding physical examinations in a language and manner they can understand. Accredited interpreter services are to be used to facilitate communication with consumers who are non-hearing or from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in accordance with MP 0051/17 [Language Services Policy](#).

The presence of a chaperone or support person (or both) is to be offered during the physical examination in accordance with the WACHS [Chaperone Policy](#).

WACHS is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal Health is everyone's business. All staff need to consider and respond to the needs of Aboriginal people as part of their core business. Staff unfamiliar with a consumer's cultural group are to ensure that a Aboriginal Mental Health Worker is consulted and seek advice to increase cultural awareness in line with the WACHS [Aboriginal Mental Health Consultation Guideline](#).

Physical healthcare is to be planned and delivered in a manner that respects and where possible, incorporates cultural, spiritual, gender specific needs, religious beliefs, and practices. Where the consumer is of Aboriginal descent, the consumer is to be offered the support of an Aboriginal Mental Health Worker to advocate for culturally appropriate care. With respect to physical health care of a patient who identifies as Aboriginal, staff must be particularly mindful of cultural needs with regards to trauma informed care, age, and gender specific considerations such as men's and women's business.

Physical health care needs are to be considered and included in the planning and provision of comprehensive care delivered or coordinated by the mental health service. Comorbid use of alcohol and other drugs and lifestyle choices are to be recognised in treatment planning.

All relevant information regarding a consumer's physical health care needs is to be communicated and documented accurately in a timely manner and in accordance with MP 0155/21 [Statewide Standardised Clinical Documentation for Mental Health Services](#) and the WACHS [Clinical Documentation Policy](#).

WACHS acknowledges and supports the principles outlined in the [Carers Recognition Act 2004](#) (WA) and the associated Western Australian Carers Charter. WACHS mental health staff are to recognise the role of carers, family and support persons, and facilitates their

involvement in the assessment and management of physical health care needs of consumers.

Where clinical care requirements extend beyond the scope of the mental health service, collaboration with alternative or specialist care delivery services is to be considered. Consumers and their families are to be offered information regarding relevant supports and appropriately referred to other services for further care, as required.

Clinicians must ensure that the physical health and wellbeing of consumers is regularly assessed. For the purpose of this policy the core components of physical health care of mental health consumers consist of:

- physical health examination
- physical appearance assessment
- oral health assessment
- medication review and education
- metabolic screening and monitoring
- referral to specialist clinicians (if required)
- shared cared communication with General Practitioner or Primary Health Provider.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

The **Regional Executive Director** is responsible for ensuring that treating teams have the appropriate equipment and resources to provide physical health care and ensure escalation and governance systems are in place.

The **Regional Mental Health Manager / Operations Manager** is responsible for the operational management of the mental health service in consultation with the Regional Executive Director, Clinical Directors and Mental Health Clinical Nurse Managers / Team Leaders.

**Clinical Directors** (Mental Health) have overall responsibility for clinical governance of WACHS Mental Health Services.

The **Consultant Psychiatrist** is responsible for the psychiatric/medical management of consumers in consultation with the multidisciplinary treatment team.

The **Clinical Nurse Manager/Team Leader** in collaboration with senior clinical staff is responsible for:

- implementation of this policy and associated procedures
- daily operation of the mental health service
- onboarding, rostering, professional development, and performance management of nursing/allied health staff.

**Clinical Staff** are responsible for the provision of mental health care within their scope of practice in accordance with applicable legislation, policies, procedures and best practice standards.

**All staff** are required to comply with the directions in WACHS policies and procedures as per their roles and responsibilities. Guidelines are the recommended course of action for WACHS and staff are expected to use this information to guide practice. If staff are unsure which policies procedures and guidelines apply to their role or scope of practice, and/or

are unsure of the application of directions they should consult their manager in the first instance.

## 4. Monitoring and Evaluation

The WACHS Mental Health Clinical Documentation Audit is conducted annually and includes compliance monitoring related to physical health, including:

- completion of SSCD Physical Examination within mandated time limits
- documentation of the SSCD Treatment Support and Discharge Plan
- alcohol and other drug screening tools.

Clinical incidents notified in clinical incident management system (Datix CIMS) under this policy are monitored through regional mental health governance meetings and the Mental Health Central Office Safety, Quality and Risk Steering Committee.

Any incident that meets the criteria for a notifiable incident as defined by the [Mental Health Act 2014](#) (WA) must be reported to the Chief Psychiatrist in accordance with the [Policy for Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Incidents to the Chief Psychiatrist](#). The Office of the Chief Psychiatrist actively monitors and reviews reported notifiable incidents for all Health Service Providers.

This policy is to be reviewed every five years, or earlier if required. Evaluation of this policy is to be carried out by the Mental Health directorate in consultation with regional Mental Health Services.

Evaluation methods and tools may include:

- staff feedback and consultation
- carer and consumer feedback and consultation
- survey
- compliance monitoring
- benchmarking
- reporting against organisational targets.

## 5. References

Government of Western Australia (WA), Department of Health. [State-wide Standardised Clinical Documentation for Mental Health Services - MP 0155/21](#). Perth, WA [Accessed: 13 May 2025]

Government of Western Australia, Office of the Chief Psychiatrist. [Clinicians' Practice Guide to the Mental Health Act 2014](#) (Edition 3.3). Perth, WA: Office of the Chief Psychiatrist (WA); 2024 [Accessed 13 May 2025]

Government of Western Australia, Office of the Chief Psychiatrist (WA) [Internet] [Chief Psychiatrist's Standards for Clinical Care](#). Perth, WA: Office of the Chief Psychiatrist (WA); 2022 [Accessed 13 May 2025]

Government of Western Australia, Office of the Chief Psychiatrist (WA) [Internet] [Chief Psychiatrist's Standards for Authorisation of Hospitals under the Mental Health Act 2014](#). Perth, WA: Office of the Chief Psychiatrist (WA) [Accessed 13 May 2025]

Lambert TJ, Reavley NJ, Jorm AF, Oakley Browne MA. [Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists expert consensus statement for the treatment, management and monitoring of the physical health of people with an enduring psychotic illness](#). Aust N Z J Psychiatry. 2017 Apr;51(4):322-337. doi: 10.1177/0004867416686693. Epub 2017 Feb 1. PMID: 28343435. [Accessed: 13 May 2025]

Stanley, S. & Laugharne, J [Internet] [Clinical guidelines for the physical care of mental health consumers](#). Community, Culture and Mental Health Unit, School of Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences, The University of Western Australia. Perth, WA: The University of Western Australia; 2010 [Accessed: 13 May 2025]

## 6. Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Mental Health Service</b>	As defined in the <i>Mental Health Act 2014</i> , Division 1 - Definitions and notes, mental health service means any of these services: (i) a hospital, but only to the extent that the hospital provides treatment or care to people who have or may have a mental illness (ii) a community mental health service (iii) any service, or any service in a class of service, prescribed by the regulations for this definition.
<b>Physical examination</b>	For the purposes of this policy the core components of a physical examination include: • physiological observations – blood pressure (BP); pulse and respiratory rate; temperature • weight and waist circumference or waist to hip ratio • height if not already recorded • examination of respiratory, cardiovascular, gastrointestinal and neurological systems.

## 7. Document Summary

<b>Coverage</b>	WACHS wide
<b>Audience</b>	Mental Health Clinical Staff
<b>Records Management</b>	Clinical: <a href="#">Health Record Management Policy</a>
<b>Related Legislation</b>	<a href="#">Mental Health Act 2014</a> (WA) <a href="#">Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Act 2023</a> (WA) <a href="#">Guardian and Administration Act 1990</a> (WA)
<b>Related Mandatory Policies / Frameworks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MP 0062/17 <a href="#">Alcohol and Other Drug Withdrawal Management Policy</a></li> <li>• MP 0095/18 <a href="#">Clinical Handover Policy</a></li> <li>• MP 0134/20 <a href="#">Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration Policy</a></li> <li>• MP 0175/22 <a href="#">Consent to Treatment Policy</a></li> <li>• MP 0131/20 <a href="#">High Risk Medication Policy</a></li> <li>• MP 0104/19 <a href="#">Medication Review Policy</a></li> <li>• MP 0155/21 <a href="#">State-wide Standardised Clinical Documentation for Mental Health Services Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Clinical Governance, Safety and Quality Framework</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Mental Health Framework</a></li> </ul>
<b>Related WACHS Policy Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Acute Psychiatric Unit Clinical Handover Procedure</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Adult Psychiatric Inpatient Services - Referral, Admission, Assessment, Care, Treatment and Discharge Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Aboriginal Mental Health Consultation Guideline</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Chaperone Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Clinical Observations and Assessments Clinical Practice Standard (physiological (vital signs), neurovascular, neurological and fluid balance)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Falls Prevention and Management - Clinical Practice Standard</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">High Risk Medications Procedure</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Medication Prescribing and Administration Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Physical Health Care for Consumers within Mental Health Inpatient Units Procedure</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Physical Health Care for Mental Health Consumers within Community Services Procedure</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration (RRAD) Policy</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration Procedure</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Specialised Medication – Lithium Guideline</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Specialised Medication - Olanzapine Pamoate - Zyprexa Relprevv® Guideline</a></li> </ul>
<b>Other Related Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAMHS <a href="#">Psychotropic Medication – Monitoring Adverse Physical Health Effects Policy</a></li> <li>• DoH <a href="#">Guidelines for the Safe and Quality Use of Clozapine Therapy in the WA health system</a></li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Chief Psychiatrist's Standard: Sexual Safety of Consumers of Mental Health Services</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Office of the Chief Psychiatrist's Sexual Safety Guidelines</a></li> <li>• UWA <a href="#">Clinical Guidelines for the Physical Care of Mental Health Consumers</a></li> </ul>
<b>Related Forms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">MR23 WACHS Mental Health Cultural Information Gathering Tool</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">MR140A Adult Observation and Response Chart (A-ORC)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">SSCD forms completed in webPSOLIS:</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Mental Health Physical Examination Form (SMHMR903)</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Mental Health Physical Appearance Form (SMHMR904)</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Physical Examination Form (CAMHS005)</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Mental Health Metabolic Monitoring Form (SMH001)</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Related Training Packages</b>	<p>Available from <a href="#">MyLearning</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialty training and competency as required</li> </ul>
<b>Aboriginal Health Impact Statement Declaration (ISD)</b>	ISD Record ID: 4224
<b><a href="#">National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards</a></b>	4.01, 5.01, 5.04, 5.07, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12, 5.13, 5.14, 8.01, 8.04, 8.06
<b><a href="#">Aged Care Quality Standards</a></b>	Nil
<b><a href="#">Chief Psychiatrist's Standards for Clinical Care</a></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Physical Health Care of Mental Health Consumers</a></li> </ul>
<b>Other Standards</b>	<a href="#">Chief Psychiatrist's Standards for Authorisation of Hospitals under the Mental Health Act 2014:</a> 2.14, 2.49(e), 4.5, 4.13.

## 8. Document Control

Version	Published date	Current from	Summary of changes
1.00	8 August 2025	8 August 2025	New policy

## 9. Approval

<b>Policy Owner</b>	Executive Director Mental Health
<b>Co-approver</b>	Executive Director Clinical Excellence Executive Director Nursing and Midwifery Services
<b>Contact</b>	Program Officer Clinical Practice Standards – Mental Health
<b>Business Unit</b>	Mental Health
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