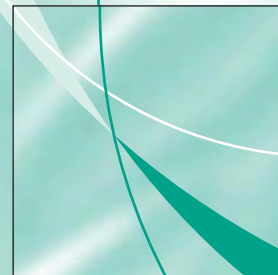


Appendix 5:

National Standards for Mental Health Services



The *National Standards for Mental Health Services* are a key mechanism for assuring the quality of mental health services. They were endorsed by the AHMAC National Mental Health Working Group in 1996, with a commitment from all jurisdictions to implementation. This commitment was affirmed in the Australia Health Care Agreements 1998-2003 and the related mental health Information Development Plans agreed between the Australian Government and each State/Territory.

The *National Standards for Mental Health Services* were developed based on widespread consultation and field trialling to ensure their applicability to public specialised mental health services. The standards are intended to:

- Work alongside existing accreditation standards for the health care system, such as the disability service standards;
- Serve as a tool for states and territories in monitoring the achievement of standards through service/funding agreements;
- Provide a blueprint for development of new and changing mental health services; and
- Provide a basis for informing consumers and carers of what they can expect from mental health services; and
- Be used by consumers and carers when providing feedback on the services they receive.

Implementation of the *National Standards for Mental Health Services* means formal in-depth review of mental health services against the Standards by an external accreditation body.

External accreditation agencies, such as the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) and the Quality Improvement Council (QIC), undertake accreditation processes in relation to a parent health organisation (for example a hospital, a community mental health service) which may cover a number of specialist services including mental health services.

Accreditation of a parent organisation does not currently require a mental health service to be separately assessed against the *National Standards for Mental Health Services*. Accreditation of a parent health organisation per se does not assess for, or provide information on, implementation of the *National Standards for Mental Health Services*. Assessment of a service against the Standards must be requested and involves a separate review process. Such reviews may take place in conjunction with, or separately to, overall accreditation of a parent organisation. Review against the Standards will, in some cases and in some jurisdictions, be delayed until an appropriate point is reached within the mid-term overarching accreditation cycle (for example mid-term review).

The *National Standards for Mental Health Services* cover :

1. Rights
2. Safety
3. Consumer and carer participation
4. Promoting community acceptance
5. Privacy and confidentiality
6. Prevention and mental health promotion
7. Cultural awareness
8. Integration
 - Service integration
 - Integration with the health system
 - Integration with other sectors
9. Service development
10. Documentation
11. Delivery of care
 - Access
 - Entry
 - Assessment and review
 - Treatment and support
 - Community living
 - Supported accommodation
 - Medication and other medical technologies
 - Therapies
 - Inpatient care
 - Planning for exit
 - Exit and re-entry

Progress in implementing the *National Standards for Mental Health Services* is reported annually in the *Report on Government Services* and in the *National Mental Health Report*.