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THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2014

MINISTRY OF
HEALTH & CULTURE
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Functions

The Mental Health Commission (MHC) was established in 2014 in accordance with the Mental Health Commission Law, 2013. The functions of the Mental Health Commission are as follows:

- **Quasi-judicial** – hear and determine appeals under various sections of the Law and conducts reviews where a patient has been detained and released under an emergency detention order three or more times in 30 days.
- **Recommendations to the Health Practice Commission and Councils** – this includes submitting an annual report to the Minister with responsibility for Health, review and advise on scopes of practice and codes of ethics for practitioners, provide policy advice to the relevant registering Councils and advising the Health Practice Commission regarding mental health facilities, medical research, and clinical trials in mental health.
- **General Functions** – include the following:
  - Obtain and compile statistics on mental health
  - Oversee and deliver mental health training for constables, prison officers and any other persons expected to deal with mental health patients in the performance of their functions
  - Approve a list of overseas mental health facilities
  - Research and establish protocols and guidelines for mental health advocacy and approve persons to act as advocates
  - Establish and maintain a programme which provides information to the general public concerning mental illness and co-occurring disorders and related conditions
  - Review the progress of patients transferred overseas
  - Review every six months the progress of remand prisoners deemed unfit to plead and submit it to the Chief Officer, Judicial Administration
  - Give policy advice to the Minister responsible for health on any aspect of the local mental health system

Membership

The current members of the Mental Health Commission appointed for three years are:

Dr Marc Lockhart	Chair
Dr Taylor Burrowes Nixon	Deputy Chair
Mr Olivaire Watler	Deputy Chair
Ms Julene Banks	Member
Ms Kimberly Voaden	Member
Pastor Dale Forbes	Member/Layperson
Ms Faylene Ebanks-Suckoo	Member/Layperson
Ms Janett Flynn	Secretary/Ministry's Liaison

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Meetings

The first meeting of the Mental Health Commission was convened 12th February, 2014. In attendance were the appointed members and the Chief Officer of the Ministry of Health, Ms Jennifer Ahearn. Unfortunately, the then Minister of Health was unavoidably absent but made himself available for a photo opportunity with the members of the Commission. The Commission held 9 meetings for the year 2014.

Overview of the mental health system

The Behavioral Health and Psychiatric Unit (formerly Mental Health Unit) at the Health Services Authority (H.S.A) is an 8 bed unit that was designed as an adult facility for acute care of patients suffering from serious mental illnesses. There is also a facility providing treatment for patients suffering from alcohol and substance abuse. Another facility for housing patients with mental illness is Her Majesty's Cayman Islands Prison Service. Although not ideal, there are mental health patients who have committed crimes and will require housing in the prison facility. Currently, there is no inpatient facility for children and adolescents, but if necessary they are admitted to the unit, where they are treated.

Mental health services are delivered through the hospital and local private facilities, and mental health care facilities located overseas. In 2013, almost 4,000 patients were treated in the government and some outpatient private facilities, of which 9 percent were children and adults 17 years of age or younger.

While there is an adequate number of mental health practitioners (psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health nurses, occupational therapists etc.) employed in the public and private sectors, the distribution of human resources among the 3 islands is disproportionate as there is no psychiatrist, psychologist or occupational therapist present on the Sister Islands.

Long –Term Residential Mental Health Facility

The Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Chair, Mental Health Commission and other relevant stakeholders has been meeting to discuss the establishment of a Long Term Residential Mental Health Facility (LTRMHF). A Steering Committee of the stakeholders was recently approved by Cabinet, and will meet in April 2015 to finalize the Strategic Outline Case and develop the request for proposal (RFP). The RFP will assist with the selection of the preferred candidate to create the Outline Business Case. This will take us one step closer in identifying the solution to accommodate our mentally ill patients both local and overseas requiring long term mental health care.

World Health Organization Assessment Instrument for Mental Health Systems (WHO-AIMS)

The study was conducted in July 2014 with technical assistance provided by the Pan American Health Organization. This tool has been used in over 100 countries for collecting essential information on the mental health system of a country. The information will assist countries to improve mental health systems and provide a baseline for monitoring any changes. While there are significantly more strengths identified in the report, there are a number of weaknesses that needs to be addressed. Some of these include a National Mental Health Policy, the establishment of a long term residential mental health facility, and the need for an increased number of mental health professionals to treat children and adolescents in the outpatient public sector facilities.

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Training

As prescribed under the Law, the Commission conducted 2 training sessions in 2014 on the mental health legislation; the first session conducted in July 2014 had 24 participants drawn from Family Support Unit, Behavioral Health Associates Cayman, Department of Counselling Services, Department of Community Rehabilitation, HM Northward Prison Services, Health Services Authority, Judicial Administration, Department of Children and Family Services and the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service.

The second session, held in October 2014, was mainly for members of the Royal Cayman Islands Police Services. However, due to several requests we had in attendance staff from the Attorney General's Chambers and Judicial Administration.

Both training sessions were received well by all the participants and stimulated lots of dialogue and interactive discussion.

More training sessions are planned for the year 2015.

Email address and Facebook Page

The MHC established its own email address where persons can email their queries directly to mhc@gov.ky.

Special thanks to Dr Taylor Burrowes for setting up the facebook page at www.facebook.com/mhc.gov.ky

World Mental Health Day

This day is celebrated annually on 10th October, 2014. The theme for 2014 was "Living with Schizophrenia". A number of activities were organized by the staff of the Psychiatry and Behavioral Health Department at the Health Services Authority (HSA) in collaboration with the Mental Health Commission. These included a church service, appearances on Talk Today and For the Record, and a long service awards ceremony for members of staff at the H.S.A.

Detention Forms

Under the Mental Health Commission Law, 2013, all detention forms must be forwarded to the secretary of the Mental Health Commission for storage and filing. During the period April – December 2014, the Mental Health Commission received close to 50 individual detention forms. The following represents the breakdown of the forms received:

- Request for review – 6
- Request for an Emergency Detention Order by a Constable - 5
- Assessment for the possible issuance of an Emergency Detention Order – 18
- Observation Order - 6
- Assisted Outpatient Treatment Order -11
- Treatment Order - 2

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The forms are reviewed by the secretary to the Commission to determine whether the members need to be notified of any outstanding issues or observations.
There were 31 patients admitted over this period for various types and degrees of mental illness. During this first year no request for an appeal was received by the Commission.

Mental Health Logo Competition

The MHC launched a logo competition in the schools in October 2014. The Commission received 9 entries and the winner was Kaydence Whitney, a student from Hope Academy. Ms Whitney received a mini iPad donated by Behavioral Health Associates Cayman, The Wellness Centre and Tony Cleaver of Cayman MAC Store. The logo is in its final stages of adaptation and completion with the assistance of Government Information Services.

Fundraising

The MHC is desirous of having the ability to raise funds due the financial constraints of government. It has been proposed that the legislation should be amended to accommodate this provision. There are ongoing discussions with the Chief Officer of the Ministry of Health on the best way forward.

Brochure

A draft brochure on "Know the facts/FAQs on the mental health legislation" has been prepared and should be finalized by the end of the second quarter of 2015. The information contained within will be available through health care facilities within the public and private sectors.

Health Care Conference

In November 2014, the Chair of the Mental Health Commission presented at the annual health care conference on the topic "**an overview of mental health in Cayman**'. Over 500 participants were in attendance and the presentation generated a lot of discussion and food for thought. The role and function of the MHC were also highlighted.

Mental Health Advocates

In October 2014, the Mental Health Commission invited submissions from the public seeking mental health advocates to serve as volunteers. These individuals will assist and work alongside mental health professionals to provide public education sessions that will help to reduce stigma and to act as advocates for the mentally ill. The MHC received 9 responses and is in the process of contacting the individuals to discuss their involvement.

Ongoing Initiatives/Projects

The MHC continues to partner with other stakeholders such as the Business and Professional Women's (BPW) Club to assist with public education and awareness on mental health, training in the community and fundraising.

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