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THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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1. INTRODUCTION

Functions

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

- Quasi-judicial hear and determine appeals under various sections of the Law and conduct 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 illness;
 - oversee and deliver mental health training and sensitisation sessions for prison officers, constables and any other persons who may, in the performance of their functions, be expected to deal with mental health patients;
 - make recommendations to the Minister regarding mental health research;
 - establish and maintain a programme which provides information to the general public concerning mental illness and co-occurring disorders and related conditions;
 - review and evaluate the community's mental health needs, services and special problems with a view to making recommendations on policy and research to the Minister responsible for mental health;
 - review the progress of patients transferred overseas under section 14 of the Mental Health Act;
 - review and offer advice to the Elections Office regarding the eligibility of mental health patients; and
 - give policy advice to the Minister responsible for health on any aspect of the local mental health system.

2. Membership

The members of the Mental Health Commission, who served for 2020, are as follows:

Dr. Marc Lockhart

Chair

Cline Glidden, Jr

Sutton Burke

Deputy Chair

Hon. Alex Henderson, QC

Deputy Chair Member

Nurse Dympna Carten

Member

Fiona McDougall Member
Cheryl Myles Member
Jackie Neil Member
Dr Enoka Richens Member

Janett Flynn Secretary/Ministry's Liaison

3. *Meetings*

The Mental Health Commission held nine meetings for the year 2020, six of which were held via Zoom.

4. Overview of the mental health system

The Psychiatry and Behavioural Health Unit (formerly Mental Health Unit) at the Health Services Authority (HSA) is an eight 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 operated by the Department of Counselling Services. 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 in the public sector by the Health Services Authority, local private health care facilities, and mental health care facilities located overseas.

While there is an adequate number of mental health practitioners (psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health nurses, counsellors, therapists etc.) employed in the public and private sectors, the distribution of human resources among the three islands is disproportionate as there is no resident psychiatrist, psychologist nor occupational therapist present on the Sister Islands. Conversely, there are three community psychiatric nurses serving the Cayman Islands, two on Grand Cayman and one on the Sister Islands.

5. Long –Term Residential Mental Health Facility (LTRMHF)

In July 2017, the Ministry of Health on behalf of the Cayman Islands Government signed a contract with Montgomery Sisam Architects Inc., a Toronto-based company, to conduct the Design and Construction Costs Consultancy Services for the building of a Long-Term Residential Mental Health Facility.

There are three members of the Commission, including the Chairperson, who are also members of the Long-Term Residential Mental Health Facility Steering Committee, who continue to contribute significantly in the design and development of the facility though their clinical expertise and personal encounters with patients and family members.

On 8th October 2019, the Cayman Islands Government broke ground on the construction of the Long-Term Residential Mental Health Facility, which is expected to be completed in December 2021. This facility will serve residents who have a chronic mental illness and is not for acute care of the mentally ill.



The facility, when completed, will form part of the continuum of care of mental health services, accommodating 54 clients in nine cottages, each having six beds.

There remains the need for this facility as many patients have to be kept in the inpatient unit at the hospital which has only eight beds. The inpatient unit is for acute care and not long-term care. Some families do not want or are reluctant to send their loved ones overseas for care.

6. Training

As required under the Law, the Commission is required to conduct training and sensitization sessions for prison officers, constables and any other persons who may, in the performance of their functions, be expected to deal with mental health patients. In 2020, one training session was delivered to members of Her Majesty's Cayman Islands Prison Service for new recruits and existing staff members.

7. Detention Forms

Under the Mental Health Commission Act, 2013, all detention forms must be forwarded to the secretary of the Mental Health Commission for storage and filing. During the period January – December 2020, the Mental Health Commission received 104 detention forms, 12 percent less compared to the same period in 2019. The following represents a comparison of the forms received for the same period in 2019:

TYPE OF FORM	Number of Forms Received		
	2019	2020	
Request for Review	11	3	
Request for an Emergency	12	2	
Detention Order by a			
Constable			
Assessment for the	48	49	
Possible Issuance of an			
Emergency Detention			
Order			
Observation Order	20	21	
Assisted Outpatient	25	29	
Treatment Order			
Treatment Order	2	- ·	
TOTAL	118	104	

These entries, totaling 60 patients, represent the number of patients seen and admitted to the Unit at the hospital for a primary diagnosis of a person suffering from a serious mental illness or mental impairment. Over the same period in 2019, a similar observation was noted. There was a significant decrease in the use of the Request for Review form and the Request for an Emergency Detention Order by a Constable for the year 2020. The Request for Review form may be completed by a nearest relative of the patient

who is of the opinion that the patient is suffering from a mental illness, mental impairment and may harm him or herself. The Request for an Emergency Detention Order by a Constable form is completed by a member of the RCIPS who takes a person into protective custody to the Accident and Emergency Unit at the Cayman Islands Hospital where they are assessed. If they require hospitalization an Emergency Detention Order lasting up to 72 hours is issued. The use of the Assisted Outpatient Treatment Order detention form continues to be very relevant in the treatment of patients and allows the treating psychiatrist to provide treatment, with or without the patient's consent.

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. The Commission received one appeal for the year 2019 which had its final hearing in 2020 and a decision made by the Tribunal.

8. World Mental Health Day

This day is celebrated annually on 10th October. The theme for 2020 was "Mental Health for All. Greater Investment". Mental health is a human right and should be available to all. As a country we must ensure that investment in mental health is prioritized even more so after 2020 and the experience of the pandemic.

9. Data Collection Form

For the year 2020, quarterly submission of data collection forms were received from nine facilities, two of which are public facilities. The first data collection form was developed and circulated in June 2018 for the collection of data from health care facilities. The highlights of the findings for 2020 are as follows:

- 90 percent of the nine facilities that responded receive/accept health insurance for mental illness; however, what is unknown is whether the coverage is adequate for the treatment provided. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the amount allocated for mental illness under the Standard Health Insurance Contract (SHIC) is inadequate and is used only for inpatient admission.
- There is a continuous upward trend of an increase in the number of persons who seek treatment for a mental illness. This is a positive step which may suggest that the stigma associated with a mental illness is decreasing, persons are taking care of themselves as well as education and prevention programmes and resources are more accessible.
- A large percentage of clients seen is between 25 and 64 years, followed by the 0-18 years age group. This confirms that many of our children and adolescents seek care and treatment for mental illness.
- More females than males are clients.
- The number of visits/encounters for outpatient services continue to increase over the same period for the previous year. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the second quarter of 2020 reflected a decline in the number of patient encounters and the number of patients seeking treatment and care. However, as health care facilities reopened and with the availability of telemedicine the numbers increased as the arrival of COVID-19 presented a new set of challenges.
- For the Caribbean Haven Residential facility more males than females use the inpatient facility,
 where the average length of stay for residents was 23 days. For the Health Services Authority, the
 average number of patients admitted with a primary or secondary diagnosis for mental health on
 a quarterly basis is 110 with more females than males being admitted. The average length of
 hospital stay was 10 days.

- Counsellor/Therapist makes up a large number of mental health employees employed by the facilities.
- The top three diagnoses were grouped under anxiety, depression, and other, where other could include, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Autism, Autism Spectrum Disorder etc.

Representatives from the nine health care providers were invited to review the current Data Collection Form to ensure that the information submitted is consistent and relevant. The form was revised and commencing in 2021 an updated form will be circulated for use.

10. Other Matters

During the year 2020, the Commission continued its collaboration with various partners to help to raise the awareness through community outreach, and to fulfil its mandate in accordance with the Mental Health Commission Act, 2013.

Her Majesty's Cayman Islands Prison - Foreign and Commonwealth Office Project

At the invitation of the Governor's Office, Dr Jake Hard was contracted to conduct a review of Mental Health Provision within Her Majesty's Prison Service. The visit was conducted in October 2019 and the report received in early 2020. Members of the Commission participated as key stakeholders in the consultative process and are now working with a small working group to review the recommendations to develop an implementation plan. The report was very comprehensive.

Alex Panton Foundation – Non- Profit Organisation

Members of the Commission attended and participated in the third annual youth symposium of the Alex Panton Foundation (APF) in February 2020. Other working relationships with the Foundation are the establishment of an Adolescent Mental Health Hub in partnership with the Ministry and the Health Services Authority to be completed in late 2021.

In addition, APF shared with the Commission the idea of their proposed online adolescent peer support group. Young people will have an opportunity to speak with trained counsellors and volunteers as part of the ongoing efforts to address mental illness.

Public Health England (PHE)

In March 2020, representatives of PHE arrived in the Cayman Islands to conduct a situational analysis of the mental health system. The visit was funded through a grant for the six Caribbean Overseas Territories. Due to the pandemic the report is delayed but is expected to be finalized by May 2021.

National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) – Human Concerns Cluster/Helpline

Nurse Dympna Carten, a member of the Commission, was invited to be a member of the Human Concerns subcommittee of NEOC. Nurse Carten has successfully completed the Psychological First Aid course through PAHO and during the pandemic was able to incorporate and present the training to participants of the Department of Children and Family Services Shelter Volunteer programme and will continue to do so in 2021. Through her role in NEOC, Nurse Carten was instrumental in establishing the mental health Helpline with the assistance of the Department of Counselling Services and the Employee Assistance Programme. The helpline is still operating but with a reduced number of calls.

Criminal Procedure Code

In accordance with the Criminal Procedure Code a person who is found by the Court not guilty by reason of insanity must be transferred to a mental hospital for care and treatment. This situation was presented



to the Commission along with representatives from the Prison Service, Department of Community Rehabilitation, Community Psychiatric Nurse and the treating psychiatrist from the Cayman Islands Hospital. At the time of writing the report, the patient remains in the unit at the hospital as overseas placement is explored.

Loud, Silent, Voices - NGO

The local support group, Loud, Silent Voices, continues to work towards opening a housing facility for the mentally ill. This is an eight bed facility with the opening expected to take place in May/June 2021.

Meeting with the Commissioner of Police and Officer Jonathan Kern

The Commissioner of Police appointed Officer Jonathan Kern as the liaison officer for mental health. In his role, Officer Kern would be the point of contact for dealing with requests from the Psychiatry and Behavioural Health Unit and other mental health concerns in the community. Officer Kern meets with the Commission frequently to update and share any issues or ideas with members, and the need for continuous training of the officers.

Community Group Home - Jamaica

At the time of writing this report, there are four females and eight males residing at the group home in Jamaica. The youngest person is age 36 years and the oldest age 60 years. One person has been residing at the group home for over 20 years.

Appeal

One appeal was received by the Commission during 2020. The members of the Tribunal represented and hearing the appeal were an attorney-at-law, medical doctor, therapist and a layperson.

Research in Mental Health

A PhD research candidate approached the Commission for guidance and ethical approval of her research proposal on the topic child and adolescent mental health services. It is hoped that with research advocacy efforts for mental health will be strengthened and data more readily available.

Community Matters

There have been patients/clients in the community who seek the support/assistance of the Commission to assist with the safety and well-being of their families. One member of the community met with the Commission to talk about the challenges faced by her family surrounding mental health, the lack of specialized programmes and the support required for her children.

There are others who because of interference or lack of insight from family members are denied the care needed to allow them to live productive and meaningful lives. The Commission continues to work with relevant agencies/persons such as the Conditional Release Board and the healthcare practitioners to provide the best outcomes for patients and their families.

The Commission met with the Head of Psychiatry at the Cayman Islands Hospital to discuss the referral process to external healthcare providers as was raised by a private healthcare provider of mental health service.



11. Conclusion

The Commission completed seven years of work with members who are committed and dedicated to the topic of mental health and those affected. Over the past seven years, with the support from the Ministry and community partners the level of awareness surrounding mental health continues to increase. Public Health England and the Pan American Health Organization, our international partners, are involved at the technical level to provide advice and support in developing strategies to address mental health stigma. Mental health has no face, colour nor gender and must be considered equally important as our physical health. Our mental health affects the way we think, feel and act.

The arrival of the pandemic did not deter the work of the Commission but afforded us the opportunity to highlight many of the challenges faced during a pandemic, how to cope and the resources available. The Chair of the Commission, along with a pediatrician and psychologist were featured in a mental health discussion focusing on children in June 2020.

The work continues as we await the completion, staffing and opening of the Long-Term Residential Mental Health Facility.

Mental health care and services must be central to our policies with the objective of prevention and promotion of mental health and mental well-being, and a focus on recovery.

In closing, I leave you with the World Health Organization's definition for mental health: it is "a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community".

Thank you.

