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THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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1. INTRODUCTION

Functions

The Mental Health Commission (the "MHC" or "Commission") 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 2022, were as follows:

Dr. Marc Lockhart Chair

Cline Glidden, Jr **Deputy Chair** Hon. Alex Henderson, KC **Deputy Chair** Sutton Burke 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

In accordance with section 5 (1) of The Mental Health Commission Act, 2013, "the Commission shall meet as often as it thinks necessary for the performance of its functions and shall, without limiting the generality of this provision, meet at least four times in a year". The Commission held eleven meetings for the year 2022, including an extraordinary meeting with the Minister of Health and Wellness.

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 11-bed unit that was designed as an adult facility for acute care of patients suffering from serious mental illnesses. There is also a residential facility, Caribbean Haven Residential Centre, 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 His 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.

Mental health services are delivered by registered mental health practitioners in the public sector at the Health Services Authority, 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 nor occupational therapist present on the Sister Islands. However, in 2022, a resident psychologist was employed by the Health Services Authority to serve the Sister Islands. There are three community psychiatric nurses serving the Cayman Islands, one of whom travels to the Sister Islands once weekly to serve the clients.



5. Long -Term Residential Mental Health Facility (LTRMHF) now called Poinciana

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 were previous members of the Long-Term Residential Mental Health Facility Steering Committee and the Clinical subcommittee, who continue to contribute significantly in the design and development of the facility through 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 June 2023. 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 11 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. The inpatient mental health unit at the Health Services Authority continues to be at over capacity during most of 2022.

The most recent monthly status report (May 2023) of the facility revealed that the three main buildings have been completed and the assigned contractor is working on testing and commissioning of the buildings and the punch list items. With regards to the completion of the cottages, the assigned contractor has been experiencing financial issues, hence a delay in the completion of the work by subcontractors.

The landscape and NRA works are mostly completed at the time of writing this report.

The Cabinet approved name for the facility is *Poinciana: Residential Mental Health Facility*.

6. Training

As required under the Act, 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 2022, three training sessions were delivered to a total of 24 participants from the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service.



7. Detention Forms

Under the Mental Health Act (2022 Revision), all detention forms must be forwarded to the secretary of the Mental Health Commission for storage and filing. During the period January – December 2022, the Mental Health Commission received 163 detention forms, a significant increase over the last year. The following table represents a comparison of the forms received for the period 2020 to 2022:

TYPE OF FORM	NUMBER OF FORMS RECEIVED		
	2020	2021	2022
Request for Review	3	21	13
Request for an Emergency Detention Order by a Constable	2	-	13
Assessment for the Possible Issuance of an Emergency Detention Order	49	40	75
Observation Order	21	16	28
Assisted Outpatient Treatment Order	29	25	32
Treatment Order	-	1	2
TOTAL	104	103	163

These entries, totaling 89 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. Again, this represents a forty percent increase in the number of patients admitted over the same period in 2021. The most significant increase was seen in the use of the assessment form for the possible issuance of an emergency detention order. The initial detention is for 72 hours where it has been determined by the medical officer that the person is suffering from a serious mental illness or mental impairment. MHC may wish to provide further explanation on the reason(s) for an increase in the number of detention forms received.

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 no appeals received by the Commission for the year 2022.

8. World Mental Health Day

This day is celebrated annually on 10th October. The theme for 2022 "Make Mental Health and Wellbeing for all a global priority". The theme was designed in an effort to reconnect and rekindle our efforts to protect and improve mental health, even whilst still going through a pandemic. The theme gave the Cayman Islands an opportunity to bring together people with mental health conditions, advocates employees and employers to come together and be vocal about what is needed to ensure that priority is given to our mental health and well-being.

Infinite Mindcare, owned and operated by a member of the Mental Health Commission hosted a virtual mental health day conference for professionals on that day.

Members of the Commission also participated in scheduled talk shows on 10th and 11th October.



9. Data Collection Form

For the year 2022, quarterly submission of data collection forms was received from 10 facilities, three of which are public facilities, namely, Health Services Authority, Caribbean Haven Residential Centre and His Majesty's Cayman Islands Prison Service. 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 2022 are as follows:

- 80 percent of the 10 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. Many of the mental health diagnoses are lifelong illnesses requiring sustained and continuous treatment and care. Under the Health Insurance Regulations (2017 Revision), the inpatient benefit for mental health is CI\$25,000 per lifetime.
- For the year 2022, there was a downward trend from the previous year in the number of patients
 who sought treatment and care for a mental health services in all age groups. However, it should
 be noted that whilst the number of patients decreased the number of visits/encounters increased
 by 12 percent.
- A large percentage of clients seen is between 25 -44 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.
- For the Caribbean Haven Residential Centre facility more males than females use the inpatient facility, where the average length of stay for residents was 45 days, closer to the number over the previous year. For the Health Services Authority, the average length of hospital stay was 16.5 days, an increase of 50 percent over the last year.
- The employee category of counsellor/therapist makes up a large number of mental health employees employed by the facilities, followed by psychologists. The total number of psychiatrists is eight, which suggests 1:10,000 ratio, which is an optimal ratio based on international best practice.
- Also included in offering treatment and care for mental health services are registered behavior technicians, applied behavior analysts and a psychometrist. These professions provide added value to the scope of care available on the Islands.
- The top three diagnoses were grouped under anxiety, depression, and other, where other included, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Autism, Autism Spectrum Disorder etc.
- Suicide attempt remained relatively stable over the year 2022 with an average of 35 per quarter reported. However, during the previous year, 2021, this number was 27, which suggests an increase of 30% in suicide attempts for 2022, albeit there were 9 facilities reporting in 2021 and now 10 facilities reporting in 2022. This demonstrates the need that now is the time for the development of a National Suicide Prevention Programme, led by the Ministry of Health and Wellness and Mental Health Commission.

10. Other Matters

During the year 2022, 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.



Honourable Minister Turner meets with the Commission

In February 2022, Honourable Minster Turner, met with the members to discuss the proposed Mental Health Intake form developed by the Commission for use by the Health Services Authority. This was in an effort to get the Minister's support of the modernized and updated intake form for the renewal of mental health services sought outside of the H.S.A. The form is meant to gather the clinical information and progress of the treatment administered to the client in a clear and concise manner. The form was subsequently sent to the Cabinet as a Note and a workshop held in October with the relevant stakeholders, to familiarise them on the use and benefits of the form.

Another matter raised with the Hon Minister was the mental health emergency response system, which needs an overhaul with additional human resources, such as community psychiatric nurses, occupational therapists, and psychologists to support the Accident and Emergency Department at the H.S.A. A well-developed mental health emergency response system is necessary in order to provide a continuum of service in the Cayman Islands and to meet the growing needs of residents.

The Minister also sought input from the Commission on a proposed structure for the Long-Term Residential Mental Health Facility and, confirmed that the facility will become a department under the Ministry of Health and Wellness. She further gave instructions for the job description to be finalized and graded., as a matter of urgency.

Cayman Islands Disability Council

A member of the Cayman Islands Disability Council met with the Commission to discuss training opportunities that can be provided along with the Commission in the community.

Cayman Islands Insurance Association (CIIA)

One member of the Commission met with the CIAA to discuss mental health benefits and coverage offered by the local approved health insurance providers. She explained that their members will require training on the topic of mental health along with the DSM-5 classification.

Community Group Home – Jamaica

At the time of writing this report, there are four females and five males residing at the group home in Jamaica (last report received in September 2022). The youngest person is age 24 years and the oldest, age 62 years. One person has been residing at the group home for over 23 years.

Council for Professions Allied with Medicine (CPAM)

Dr Alexandra Bodden, Chair of CPAM, met with members to discuss the topic of "mental health professions regulations". Dr Bodden recommended a reclassification of the mental health professions under the Council, increasing from four professions to nine professions. The titles were unanimously supported by the members.

Guest #1

In March, Ms Megan-lee Brink, a doctoral research student, attended a meeting with the Commission to speak about her upcoming research on mental health and youth in the Cayman Islands. Ms Brink wanted to get a better understanding of the Commission's function and purpose and to get feedback on her proposed thesis.



Guest #2

In May, two members of the Parental Entitlement Working Group met with the Commission to present their proposal on increasing maternity benefits and to introduce paternity benefits through amendments to the Labour Act (2021 Revision).

They requested a letter from the Commission to support six months paid leave for women and at least two weeks for men. Members of the Commission confirmed that they have been seeing an increased need to provide perinatal and postnatal mental health services in the community.

Guest #3

In June, Dr Catherine Day, a member of the Cayman Islands Disability Committee attended the meeting to discuss training needs for the community in collaboration with the Mental Health Commission. Dr Day highlighted the need to increase awareness and education for staff of the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service and the public regarding disability awareness. Other agencies that should be provided with training are Fire Services Department and the Emergency Medical Services team.

Guest #4

In October, Dr Arlene McGill, at the request of the Chair, attended the meeting to discuss the Mental Health Intake Form as there were concerns raised by some of the healthcare providers. It was decided to host a workshop for the providers so that any concerns could be clarified and the form introduced as a matter of urgency and, to prevent further delays from the clients seeking renewal of services.

Guest #5

In November, Dr Nick Gent, Chief Medical Officer, attended a meeting of the Commission to meet with the members and to lend his support and expertise, as and when required. Dr Gent is the first CMO to be formally introduced to the Commission.

Guest #6

In November, the team from the Ministry of Home Affairs along with representatives of the His Majesty's Cayman Islands Prison Service and the Department of Community Rehabilitation presented to the Commission on the topic of "Mental Health Concerns in the Cayman Islands Criminal Justice System". They identified the need for better collaboration between the MHC, Department of Community Rehabilitation and HMCIPS. They mentioned the role and importance of the Mental Health Court, which continues to be a successful intervention for clients.

The need for a social worker to help with individuals released from prison and an added probation officer for the Sister Islands, due to the caseload were highly recommended.

It was proposed that while the Ministry of Home Affairs/CIG awaits funding to implement Dr Hard's report (Review of Mental Health Provision within Her Majesty's Prison Service Cayman Islands) completed in 2019, a programme board be established with relevant stakeholders to progress some of the recommendations.

Mental health remains a top priority for the Ministry of Home Affairs and as they develop policies, procedures and frameworks for the greater good of the staff and clients they serve, they will continue to work with the Commission for necessary input.



Guest #7

Ms Dana Brandon, Deputy CEO, CINICO, was invited to speak about the revised mental health intake form and the current referral process for people seeking treatment for mental health services.

She reiterated that CINICO does not approve referrals. All referrals are signed by the Chief Medical Officer. For referrals seeking mental health services the department head at the Psychiatry and Behavioural Unit affixes her signature and the amount of sessions required; the CMO then signs off on the referral.

She further added that the need for the change in the referral process was to provide structure and accountability and, the newly introduced mental health intake form will address that and streamline the process.

Guest #8

In December, Officer Jonathan Kern from the RCIPS met with the Commission. Mr Kern is the mental health liaison officer with the RCIPS and, as such, provides frequent updates on the state of play in the community via e-mail, in-person, or telephone.

Whilst there is no mandated specific training on mental health for officers of RCIPS, the Commission offers training on the legislation and crisis intervention management techniques to new recruits and, as requested. He encouraged and recommended that all officers are trained in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) which can be accessed locally. Community safety officers are also an added benefit and should receive the MHFA training.

The MHC proposed that a crisis intervention training programme be implemented within the RCIPS.

Inter-Ministerial Participation/collaboration/Partnerships

Two members of the Commission, the chair and the community psychiatric nurse, were invited by the Ministry of Investment, Innovation and Social Development (MIISD) to participate in a focus group organized by the Needs Assessment Unit.

A request was received by the Commission from the MIISD for comments on the establishment of a policy for safeguarding standards for vulnerable adults.

Legislation

Amendments were made to the Mental Health Act (2021 Revision), the Mental Health Regulations, 2013, and the Mental Health Commission Act, 2013 to so that they would meet the needs of residents, provide adequate safeguards for detained patients and reflect the advances in psychiatric treatments, in accordance with current practice.

11. Conclusion

The Commission completed nine years of work with members who are committed and dedicated to the topic of mental health and those affected. Over the past nine years, with the support from the Ministry and community partners, such as Alex Panton Foundation, Loud Silent Voices, the level of awareness surrounding mental health continues to increase. Mental health has no face, colour nor gender and must be considered equally important as our physical health.



The work continues as we await the completion, staffing and opening of Poinciana: Residential Mental Health Facility, to be able to bring our loved ones home and to take care of those living on island who are in need of care in a holistic environment.

The mental health helpline, now rebranded as CAYMIND, continues to be a great resource for the community.

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. Mental health service is an essential health service that must be continued and strengthened. The need to scale up mental health services and psychosocial support is an integral component of universal health coverage, through adequate financing and the implementation of a primary health care system.

In a statement published by the World Health Organisation on World Mental Health Day 2022, it reads "stigma and discrimination continue to be a barrier to social inclusion and access to the right care; importantly, we can all play our part in increasing awareness about which preventive mental health interventions work. We envision a world in which mental health is valued, promoted and protected; where everyone has an equal opportunity to enjoy mental health and to exercise their human rights; and where everyone can access the mental health care they need."

In closing, the Commission encourages all of us to look after our physical and mental health – after all, they are not independent of one another.