



Telephone (03) 9076 4713
E-mail: isfaf@alfred.org.au
Website: <http://www.ispaf.org>
Office and mail address:
C/- Waiora Clinic
Level 2, 435 Malvern Road, South Yarra 3141

November 2013

We are nearing the end of the year and our last formal activity will be our **End of Year Dinner** which is to be held at Prahran Mission again this year. Several of us will be attending the Hearing Voices Conference this week as well as a forum at the University of Melbourne on Tuesday 19th with a speaker from the United States, Will Hall. It has been a busy couple of months with a range of activities during Mental Health Week and Carers Week in October. We are already planning for 2014 and hope that we will have a good response to the survey attached to this newsletter. You may note that we haven't included 'Planning for the Future' amongst the subjects - this is because the Inner South Mental Health Carer Network is making it the topic for their mid-year forum next year.

Legal Issues

We had a very well attended meeting in October at which we heard from retired Victorian magistrate, Mr Brian Barrow, and Sgt. Doug Bowles, who with Kathryn Henderson manages MHICU, the Mental Health Integration and Coordination Unit. They discussed different aspects of the correction system and both men spoke with compassion and common sense about measures being taken to reduce the number of people with mental illness who come in contact with the law. Following the meeting one of our committee members was invited to participate in police training and he has responded with enthusiasm. Incidentally, **MHICU was presented with a Partnering Excellence Award last Friday 15 November** in recognition of an effective partnership between a Medicare Local and an external organisation - in this case Victoria Police and Alfred Psychiatry.

Service Rationalisation

At last week's meeting Dr Stafrace spoke about changes taking place within Alfred Psychiatry. Our group much appreciates his ongoing willingness to keep us informed. A great deal of change is taking place at both Commonwealth and State levels in how funding is delivered to mental health services. In 2012 the Commonwealth announced a \$550m program designed to provide better coordinated 'Pathways to Recovery' for people experiencing severe and persistent mental illness. The Alfred participated in a consortium tendering for these funds but was unsuccessful in the first round of grants. On the other hand Commonwealth funding has increased to Headspace in this region.

The Victorian Government is also re-examining how funds should best be spent and is undertaking Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation Support Service Reform. The program will now be referred to as Mental Health Community Support Services instead of PDRSS.

Dr Stafrace pointed out that there are currently a plethora of small organisations delivering mental health services in Victoria and it has become obvious that in the current climate of government stringency and competitive tendering it is unlikely that more than about three will survive in each region. Members would be aware that MIND, Lantern and ARAFEMI have become one organisation. The MI Fellowship will be discussing amalgamation with the Royal District Nursing Service at their AGM this week. Dr Stafrace also spoke of the fact that the State Government is doing its best to standardise the various regional boundaries used by Victorian departments to ensure that fewer people are marginalised by a quirk of the map.

Bayside Mental Health Community Support Services Central Intake 1800 266 664 Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm

(this information is direct from the new service - one of the intake worker plans to come to our February meeting next year)

- It's new
- It's centralised
- It's easier
- It's for consumers and carers

There is now a new way for consumer and carers to make referrals into Mental Health Community Support Services (formerly Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation Support Services). The Bayside Central Intake Service provides streamlined access to all community based mental health supports in the Bayside Medicare Local Region. Consumers, carers, GPs and other service providers can now make referrals by calling Nikki or Erica on 1800 266 664 from 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday.

Anyone can ring this one service and discuss the range of services and supports available when needing to refer a consumer to a service. The referrer can provide details and the consumer can ring Central Intake or the intake workers can contact the consumer directly. The service also supports family members and carers. When there is a concern about a family member's mental health needs, or where the person is expressing a need for carer support for themselves, they can also be referred to the service.

Intake workers will discuss with the caller what their needs are and potential goals in seeking support. Based on this phone screening, a referral will be made to the most appropriate support services, with a focus on the consumer preference.

Service types included in this new access model include:

- Home-Based Outreach Mental Health Case Management
- Residential Rehabilitation Services
- The Personal Helpers and Mentor Services (PHaMS)
- Day Programs

For more information see www.bmhcss.org.au or email centralintake@bmhcss.org.au

The service is operated by the Inner South Community Health Service on behalf of all community mental health providers in the Bayside Medicare Local region.

N.B. Clinical Services are still accessed directly through Alfred Psychiatry (1300 363 746) or Monash Health (1300 369 012)

Reductions in Funding

Two ISFAF committee members were invited to attend a recent luncheon at Airlie Leadership Development Centre in support of **HEAT**, a practical youth re-engagement program which assists in developing self-esteem and gaining accredited training qualifications in the hospitality industry. Overseen by St Kilda Youth Service and the Victoria Police, the program has recently suffered a major loss in government funding and is seeking supporters to help it transition so that it can continue to support young people to achieve their full potential.

Our members were impressed and agreed that HEAT trainees had put on a memorable event. Anyone wishing to find out more about the transition fund and the work of St Kilda Youth Service should contact the CEO of SKYS, Emma Crichton, on 9534 3685 or admin@skys.org.au

SHARC is also experiencing a cut back in funds for their family support groups and we have attached a copy of a petition with an explanatory Position Statement. If you are able to gather some signatures please return it immediately to Family Drug Help, 140 Grange Road, Carnegie 3163.

Smoking

None of us need reminding of the detrimental effects of smoking yet many of us have family members who find it difficult to stop. For those who are ready to quit, MAPrc is running a research study to evaluate the use of the drugs varenicline and bupropion as aids to smoking cessation. To help people quit, smoking cessation counselling sessions will be included as part of the study. They are looking for people

- Between 18 - 75
- Current smokers who smoke ten or more cigarettes a day
- Who are motivated to quit

The program is free and you may also be reimbursed for time and travel.

If interested call Lauren Rawlings on 9076 3245

or email L.Rawlings@alfred.org.au

Clients of Alfred Psychiatry also have access to a Smokefree Clinic via their case manager providing they consent to the referral and demonstrate a significant motivation to quit smoking. For further information contact Emma Dean at e.dean@alfred.org.au

'Dual Diagnosis - Everyone's Business'

Most members are very familiar with the term Dual Diagnosis to describe someone who suffers both a mental illness and alcohol or other substance abuse.

In mid-2012 Inner South Community Health Service was awarded funding for three years to implement a project integrating treatment for the two conditions.

The aim is to build the capacity of the services and individual workers, both internal and external to ISCHS, to more effectively identify and respond to the needs of service users with co-occurring mental health as well as substance abuse issues.

Stephanie Poole was appointed to the role of Dual Diagnosis Enhanced Practitioner to assist in the implementation of the project. Besides an advisory role in the direct management of cases, Stephanie is charged with the oversight of training programs to increase the knowledge and skills of ISCHS staff, service users and their families in relation to these co-occurring issues. In the case of families and carers her role is to ensure that they have access to information and support and to this end a WellWays Duo program is to be run in this region over a six week period commencing in the second week next February. For further information please contact Stephanie on 8644 3342 or by email at: spool@ischs.org.au

Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal

At our October committee meeting it was decided we should make a submission to 'Places Victoria' which had called for community responses to a Draft Vision for the renewal of the Fishermans Bend area. Until re-zoning twelve months ago this was part of the City of Port Phillip. A copy of the letter which has been sent will be posted under 'Housing' on our website and circulated via email. There is still time for you to suggest that affordable community housing be part of the project but **submissions close this Friday 22 November**. Please try to find time to complete the survey located on:

www.fishermansbend.vic.gov.au or email a short submission to: fishermansbend@places.vic.gov.au

Finally, please don't forget to RSVP for our End of Year Dinner on Tuesday 10 December.

However, in case you are unable to come, may you have a restful and enjoyable couple of months until we communicate again in the New Year. Judith, Edwina and I will make occasional forays to check on the office at Waiora so it will still be possible to contact our group over the summer.

Penny Lewisohn
Convenor ISFAF