

IIMHL & IIDL Leadership Briefing XL

Covid-19 and Primary Mental Health Innovations

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Introduction

Primary care is where most health care takes place, and where most people have trusted health-related relationships; its physicians are the "eyes and ears" of the health system and of communities.¹ This report describes work in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia and the UK that is enabling more people to access mental health support in primary care.

Aotearoa/New Zealand

Expanding primary mental health and addiction support

Ministry of Health

Updated 17th June 2020

The Ministry of Health is working to expand New Zealanders' access to and choice of primary mental health and addiction services so that anyone can access free mental health and addiction support when and where they need it.

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/mental-health-and-addictions/expanding-primary-mental-health-and-addiction-support>

Procure: Te Tumu Waiora

An example of the aims of the programme is demonstrated by Procure <https://www.procure.co.nz/#/> and is called "Fresh Minds" or Te Tumu Waiora. Te Tumu Waiora is a model of care that provides free and immediate access to dedicated mental health and addiction support in general practice.

To find out more visit www.tetumuwaiora.co.nz

Australia

Australian Government

Extra psychological therapy available via General Practitioners

2nd August 2020

¹ <https://bjgpopen.org/content/bjgpopen/early/2020/09/08/bjgpopen20X101128.full.pdf>

The Australian Government is providing 10 additional Medicare subsidised psychological therapy sessions for people subjected to further COVID-19 restrictions in areas impacted by the second wave of the pandemic.

<https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-greg-hunt-mp/media/additional-covid-19-mental-health-support>

UK

BMJ: More emphasis on primary care in the management of COVID-19 would improve outcomes for patients

25th September 2020

The BMJ has reported that individual and organisational efforts to respond to COVID-19 have been rapid but have sometimes lacked a connected, coherent strategy. They suggest that primary care offers opportunities for early intervention to reduce the risk of adverse outcomes, continuity of care, and enhanced whole system resilience in response to a range of health challenges arising from the evolving COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/370/bmj.m3691>

England

Mental health and primary care networks: Understanding the opportunities

The Kings Fund and Centre for Mental Health

July 2020

The report highlights that significant numbers of people assessed as too complex for IAPT services have their onward referral to specialist mental health services rejected. This often leaves general practitioners (GPs) supporting people with needs they may not have been trained to manage.

The report suggests that making progress to improve this experience will require joined-up policy-making at the national level. It indicates that close alignment is needed between primary care policy and mental health policy to ensure that each supports the other and that gaps are avoided.

https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-07/Mental%20Health%20and%20PCNs%20online%20version_1.pdf