



Targeted Community Care (Mental Health) Program – Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs)

What is PHaMs?

PHaMs aims to assist the recovery of people whose lives are severely affected by mental illness. Services do this by:

- supporting people to manage their daily activities;
- helping people to access the services they need when they need them including accommodation, social support, health, welfare and employment services;
- building their personal capacity and self-reliance; and
- increasing their levels of community participation.

PHaMs is for people with a severe mental illness who experience difficulty living independently in the community because of the impact of their illness.

From April 2013, some PHaMs services will be specifically funded to assist people with mental illness to address barriers to achieving their employment and training goals.

Why is PHaMs important?

PHaMs is important because it adopts a holistic approach that ensures participants access supports that are appropriate to their needs. Services take into account not just mental health issues, but any additional physical and emotional wellbeing issues that impact mental health recovery.

Recovery is a personal journey that is driven by the participants' goals and helps them to cope better with their illness and overcome difficulties and challenges that they may face along the way.

What does PHaMs deliver?

People accepted into PHaMs must each have an Individual Recovery Plan developed with their personal helper and mentor, so they can be supported to reach the goals that are important to their recovery. PHaMs ensures that where other services are needed it is done in a coordinated, integrated and complementary way.

PHaMs services appoint a worker to each participant to:

- help participants to better manage their daily activities and reconnect to their community;
- connect people to outreach services if needed;
- provide referrals and links with appropriate services, such as clinical, drug and alcohol, employment and accommodation services;
- work with participants in the development of Individual Recovery Plans which focus on their goals and recovery journey;
- engage and support family, carer and other relationships; and
- monitor and report progress against participants' Individual Recovery Plans.

There is no time limit to participation in the program, no formal diagnosis is required and people can be referred to the service from any source.

Who can access PHaMs services?

Participants must:

- be 16 years of age or over, unless accessing a remote PHaMs service;
- have a mental illness and have severe functional incapacity due to the mental illness;
- be willing to participate in the service voluntarily;
- be willing to comply with health and safety policies of the service; and
- live in the coverage area of the PHaMs service where they are seeking support at the time they need it unless they are homeless.

How can PHaMs services be accessed?

Service providers can be located through the Department of Social Services website at:

www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/mental-health/programs-services.

Quick Facts

As of 30 June 2012 there were 175 PHaMs sites across Australia, including 95 in metropolitan sites, 69 in non-metropolitan sites and 11 in remote sites. More than 21,000 participants have been assisted from implementation in 2007 to 30 June 2012, with over 13,000 people assisted in 2011–12.

New Measures

An additional \$154 million over five years, to June 2016, was announced in the 2011–12 Budget for community-based services to employ 425 additional personal helpers and mentors. As part of this expansion, \$50 million was allocated to provide PHaMs support to people with mental illness on, or claiming, income support payments, to help them find and keep a job.

By 30 June 2012, 65 existing PHaMs services had been funded to engage an additional 102 personal helpers and mentors nationally.

In April 2013, as part of a \$121 million Targeted Community Care (Mental Health) Program announcement, funding was provided for 38 new PHaMs services and expansion of 24 existing PHaMs services. This includes:

- 24 new PHaMs services with an employment focus;
- 18 existing PHaMs services expanded to employ additional PHaMs employment workers;
- 14 new PHaMs services; and
- six existing PHaMs services expanded to employ additional PHaMs workers.

These new and expanded services will add an additional 232 personal helpers and mentors to the national workforce.

Where can I get more information about the Targeted Community Care Program?

More information is available on the Department of Social Services website at:

www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/mental-health/programs-services.

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