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Submission to:

Canberra Health Services – Operational Procedure: Advance Agreements, Advance Consent Directions and Nominated Persons under the Mental Health Act 2015

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This submission has been prepared by the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network (the Network) in response to the invitation from Canberra Health Services (CHS). It incorporates both written and verbal feedback received from consumers in relation to the Procedure.

The Network is a consumer-led peak organisation representing the interests of mental health consumers in the ACT in policy and decision-making forums. The Network is committed to social justice and the inclusion of people with experience of mental illness. Run by consumers for consumers, our aim is to advocate for services and supports for mental health consumers which better enable them to live fuller, healthier and more valued lives in the community.

Acknowledgement of Country

We wish to acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land upon which we sit. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, and extend this respect to other Indigenous Australians who may be reading this submission. We recognise the ongoing contributions of all Indigenous peoples to ACT society and Australia more broadly.

Acknowledgement of people with lived experience

We also acknowledge people with lived and living experience of mental illness as consumers and their important lived experience expertise and ongoing contributions to the mental health sector.

General comments

The Network welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the CHS Operational Procedure: Advance Agreements, Advance Consent Directions and Nominated Persons under the Mental Health Act 2015 (the Procedure).

Consumers commend CHS on the overall Procedure, acknowledging that it is a comprehensive and well written document that is easy to follow and understand.

Further, consumers applaud the clear endorsement of My Rights, My Decisions

(particularly in the Note on p.5) as a key way consumers can make their needs, rights and decisions known, should they become unwell in the future. They are pleased to see the clear inclusion of the *My Rights, My Decisions* keyring and wallet card. In cases where a person needs mental health treatment unexpectedly, these tools support treating teams to provide the most helpful treatments and supports in the shortest time possible. This in turn supports both consumers and treating teams to experience quality healthcare outcomes despite often very difficult circumstances.

The Procedure takes a common sense approach to explain Advance Agreements, Advance Consent Directions and Nominated Persons to support their ongoing implementation. The inclusion of other instruments, such as Health Directions and Enduring Power of Attorney, is useful to ensure staff following the Procedure understand the differences between instruments and how they interact with each other when a person has more than one type in place.

Corrections and comments for review

For ease of review, we have tracked suggested changes and placed comments, rather than attempting to list them which can create confusion.

Please find attached a marked up copy of the Procedure for this purpose. This copy incorporates consumers' suggested adjustments in situ.