



ACT
Mental Health
Consumer Network

15 January 2025

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Dear Raichel

**Review of Canberra Health Services Intimate Body Care and/or
Examination of Patients or Clients by Healthcare Workers Procedure**

This letter has been prepared by the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network (the Network) in response to the invitation from Canberra Health Services (CHS). It incorporates feedback from an internal review of the CHS Intimate Body Care and/or Examination of Patients or Clients by Healthcare Workers Procedure (the Procedure). The Network welcomes the invitation to provide feedback on the Procedure.

Consumers noted the improvements made upon the prior version of this procedure that the Network reviewed in September 2023. Consumers welcomed the fact that the step-by-step outline of the intimate body care process detailed on pages 6-7 includes specific guidance on post-procedure patient care and the inclusion of patient feedback in the clinical record. Nonetheless, consumers had two points of feedback.

Firstly, consumers proposed that the Procedure should include a step where the patient is provided the opportunity to raise any sensitivities (physical and/or psychological) with the healthcare worker prior to undertaking an IBC procedure. This was raised in relation to the step in the step-by-step outline of the intimate body

care process that states; “[a]fter the procedure, provide the patient with the opportunity to discuss any discomfort, concerns, or feelings about the examination” (p. 6). Consumers stated that actively providing patients with the space to raise any issues prior to the procedure would be of benefit to both patients and healthcare workers. Patients would be supported to clarify any further needs, and healthcare workers would receive patient-specific guidance. Consumers further observed that including this step would not only directly complement the post-procedure check-in step, it would also ensure that the principle in Section 1, to “avoid making assumptions about their [the patient’s] personal boundaries”, is directly reflected in the steps of the IBC procedure. Consumers proposed that this step should be included either during the process of obtaining consent or immediately prior to the commencement of the IBC procedure.

The second point of concern related to having the intimate body care process outlined in full only in Section 3 of the Procedure. Consumers proposed that the intimate body care process should be outlined in full in its own section with the variant procedure outlining the involvement of a witness or chaperone remaining situated as is in Section 3. This would ensure that the intimate body care process is unambiguous and consistent.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Procedure. We look forward to receiving further consultation requests in future.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this feedback, please do not hesitate to contact us on (02) 6230 5796 or at policy@actmhc.org.au.

Yours sincerely



Dalane Drexler

Chief Executive Officer