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Dear Russell

**Review of Canberra Health Services Procedure: Multi-Agency Response Guide – Mental Health**

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 both written and verbal feedback received from consumers in relation to the CHS Procedure: Multi-Agency Response Guide (the MARG Procedure). The Network welcomes the invitation to provide feedback on the MARG Procedure.

Consumers supported the MARG Procedure's purpose to ensure that first responders have access to key information for safely supporting consumers who have regular contact with emergency services.

Consumers highlighted the importance of ensuring that consumers are provided with appropriate information to inform their decision to consent to the convening of a MARG. They noted that, while the MARG Procedure outlines the information that consumers are provided from CHS (e.g. 'Your Privacy at Canberra Health'), there is no description or indication of what information is provided by the ACT Ambulance

Service and ACT Policing. Consumers recommended that the process of obtaining consumer consent should include relevant privacy and information management statements from ACT Ambulance Service and ACT Policing.

Because the convening of a MARG involves sharing consumer information with other agencies, consumers stressed the importance of providing the consumer with relevant information regarding the management of and rights to their information. For instance, if a consumer is able to apply to access their records and/or information held about them by the ACT Ambulance Service and ACT Policing, then they should be provided with this information at no cost.

In Section 6, the MARG Procedure states that the consumer should receive information on accessing “legal aid, Carers Voice ACT and The Mental Health Consumers Network” (p. 5). Firstly, consumers should be provided with information about organisations that operate consumer support program who can assist them with their situation. Secondly, the Network should be referred to as the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network (noting the changes required are the insertion of the jurisdiction and the use of the singular ‘Consumer’). Thirdly, it is vital that staff and consumers are not misled about the Network and its work. If information about the Network is provided to consumers, then this information must clearly indicate that it is an organisation for consumers to engage in systemic advocacy and that it does not provide individual advocacy nor other forms of direct support to individuals.

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

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

Yours sincerely



Dalane Drexler  
Chief Executive Officer