

Media Release

From: Jill Stringer, Communications Advisor

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Subject: Mental Health Services

Masterton Hospital has moved to reassure the public over the provision of some of their mental health services.

“It’s clear there is some confusion in the community about what we are providing,” says District Health Board CEO David Meates. “In March this year we redesignated the Inpatient Unit to a Crisis Respite service for three months, as a result of staffing issues. Unfortunately, some people have seen this as a decision to close the inpatient service on a permanent basis. No such decision has been made. I can assure the community that right now, we have a mental health service that is more able to meet the needs of the community than it has been for several years.”

In the meantime, the unit will remain open as a Crisis Respite service. “We are still actively recruiting staff, and the designation of the unit will be reviewed in June,” says Mr Meates.

There is a range of support services available for people in the Wairarapa with mental health needs. Community based care gives support and treatment to enable people to stay in their own homes. The Crisis Respite service provides extra support when a person is very unwell, and can include short-term residential care. Inpatient care is 24-hour acute or intensive hospital care. Historically, some patients have been transferred to another larger mental health service for acute or intensive care, usually to Wellington or Palmerston North.

“Fortunately, the community mental health teams are fully staffed for the first time in several years, and have been able to provide greater support for mental health clients in their own environments,” says Mr Meates. “As a result, fewer people have needed to be admitted to the Crisis Respite service, and only two people have required transfer out of the region for higher levels of care. The transfer rate is the same as before the Inpatient Unit was redesignated.”

Mental Health services in the Wairarapa are undergoing an in-depth review, including extensive community consultation.

“This review will be finalised by the end of June, and will provide strategic direction for mental health services in the whole of the Wairarapa,” says Mr Meates. “No decision about the future of the hospital unit can be made in isolation from this.”

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