

Psych**AGE** News

Information and commentary about older adult and carer wellbeing

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With our Country gearing up to disseminate last year's budget promise through Primary Health Networks to offer mental health services for residents of long term care, I am feeling nostalgic, delighted and concerned.

I'm feeling nostalgic because last March, at the 2018 World Social Work Day breakfast and my book launch, I spoke about the Medicare injustice (which is still relevant) and how important it was for government to start addressing the glaring gap in services aimed at promoting the psychological and emotional health of our elderly population in care. Then soon after, the government earmarked \$83 million to address this dire need. I'm quite sure my speech had nothing to do with this announcement but if you are interested in watching it then just click [here](#).

I am feeling delighted because it is great to see our older adult population finally get the attention they deserve. It was a while ago since the Aged Care Access Initiative was available which, while not designed to target mental health in particular, was a means for some providers to offer mental health support to residents of care homes. Unfortunately this funding has long since evaporated but it was great to learn last month that Central and Eastern Sydney Primary Health Network (CESPHN) will be rolling out funding specific to mental health and residents of long term care. See the Australian Ageing Agenda's article [here](#). And in South Australia, the Country PHN has already begun this process.

I am feeling concerned for two main reasons. First, when looking into the providers that the CESPHN has contracted out it seems that the only professional group represented are psychologists. What about our skilled mental health social workers and registered counsellors? Residents deserve access to more than just psychologists.

Second, will program structure be just another medical model heavy program that is not sensitive to the unique needs of this population group? I hope that whatever is delivered is truly understanding of the needs of older people in care.

Have a great Easter break! :)



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