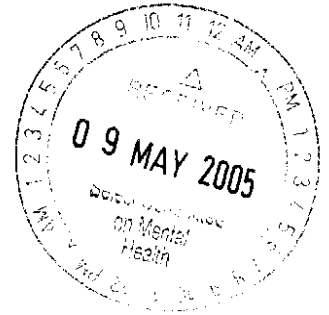




SUBMISSION FOR THE FORTHCOMING FEDERAL MENTAL HEALTH INQUIRY

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Senate Select Committee on Mental Health
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



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Dear Sir or Madam

There is a desperate need to open more beds in General and Acute facilities in Psychiatric hospitals. The population in Sydney is ever-increasing, and mental health services, particularly in the last 10 years has continued to fall apart and not able to meet the demands for the increasing numbers of the population afflicted by mental illness. To add to this, there is strong evidence to show that our youngest members are prone to Schizophrenia from smoking marijuana. As a result, the drain on already under-serviced, under-resourced facilities is compounding the problem.

Opening more beds means more trained staff. Doctors and nurses are at present struggling to cope, and many are leaving to work in other areas. This is a national tragedy and needs to be stopped by whatever means.

To stop "the revolving door" of repeated admissions, there is an urgent need to not discharge patients until they are well enough to cope in the community. When they are discharged too early, in no time, they are struggling to get re-admitted, causing further strain and stress, thereby causing deterioration in their recovery. This in turn costs the system more money, as the next admission, when available, means going back to square one. This is not fair on the consumer, or the hospitals.

In light of the latest fiasco with Cornelia Rau, the need for change in respect to patients who are "AWOL" and missing patients. At present, without any sort of data base, patients can disappear into "nowhere" and never ever be found, and worse still can end up just as Cornelia Rau did – in a Detention Centre.

Privacy Laws need to be broadened to allow details of those with mental illness to be efficiently processed when someone appears in an Emergency Department – again, saving stress on the patient, the services, and allowing time and effort to be used more effectively in dealing with the needs of other urgent patients.

Yours faithfully

Rabbi Yaakov Lieder
Director

