



The Hon. Pru Goward MP

Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Medical Research
Assistant Minister for Health
Minister for Women
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

M15/4126

Mr David Murphy
Email: david@devfinresp.org

Dear Mr Murphy

Thank you for your correspondence concerning Section 68 of the Mental Health Act 2007 (NSW) and the perceived lack of alternative treatments available for people with mental illness. I note that you also wrote to the Hon Jillian Skinner MP, Minister for Health. Please consider this as a response to both letters.

I note with interest the establishment of the Section 68 Treatment Alternatives Advocacy Group (STAAG), and its hope that more emphasis is given in treatment planning regarding alternative treatments.

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring mental health consumers have access to current evidence based multidisciplinary treatment programs, which include psychological, social work and occupational therapies, family and carer involvement and has a strong recovery focus. This does include medications prescribed by medical practitioners. The quality, safety and effectiveness of mental health treatments and interventions are closely monitored, and are reflective of evidence based practice.

I note also that STAAG has developed a list of basic and preferred treatment alternatives, and that the group would like to see agreement reached in relation to the treatment alternatives that exist for mental health consumers.

To progress the work of STAAG, I suggest that you contact the Mental Health and Wellbeing Consumer Advisory Group (BEING) – the independent, state-wide peak organisation for mental health consumers. This organisation works with consumers to achieve and support systemic change. The organisation also conducts research on consumer service needs and best practice for mental health consumer participation and quality mental health services. You may contact BEING via email on info@being.org.au or their website www.being.org.au.

Thank you again for bringing the issue of alternative treatments to the NSW Government's attention. If you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Karin Lines, Executive Director, Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Office, NSW Ministry of Health, on 9391 9262 or at kline@doh.health.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Pru Goward MP