

**2020**

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR  
THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**STATEMENT**

**CANBERRA HEALTH SERVICES  
OCCUPATIONAL VIOLENCE STRATEGY**

**Presented by  
Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA  
Minister for Health  
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This statement is an update to the Assembly on the Canberra Health Services (CHS) Occupational Violence Strategy (the Strategy). The aim of this Strategy is to eliminate and minimise risks of occupational violence (OV) in CHS work environments with as three-year implementation program (2020 to 2022). The Strategy was launched by the Chief Executive Officer of CHS, Bernadette McDonald, on 1 April 2020. I'm pleased to table a copy of the Strategy today.

The OV Strategy has been formulated following a literature review and a jurisdictional and international scan of best practice approaches by experts in OV prevention and management, Aspex Consulting. The CHS OV policy and procedure has also been reviewed and updated to align with the Strategy.

Extensive consultation was undertaken by Aspex Consulting including site visits to areas such as the Emergency Department, Maternity, the Alexander Maconochie Centre, community-based staff (across all clinical divisions), the Tuggeranong Community Health Centre, an aged care ward, a general medicine ward, the Adult Mental Health Unit and the Dhulwa Mental Health Unit.

Teleconferences were held with some areas such as the Intensive Care Unit and with executives. CHS also held two OV Strategy Working Group meetings in May and July 2019, with consumer representatives, WorkSafe ACT and unions all involved in this work. Written feedback was also received by Aspex Consulting that has fed into the OV Strategy and associated documents such as the OV policy and procedure.

Thank you to the members of the OV Strategy Working Group for their work on the development of the Strategy and all the CHS staff and external stakeholders who were involved in the consultation.

In addition to the development of the strategy, there has been a lot of work done in the last year at the organisational and local level of CHS to reduce the incidence of OV.

At the organisational level, initiatives have included a strong focus on OV safety in the design on all new build projects, an increase in security personnel in higher risk areas, a purpose-built Security Operations Centre to monitor CCTV, and the development of an OV risk assessment tool for use in local work areas.

'Respect our Staff' posters have also been developed to raise awareness in relation to OV. The posters aim to highlight that staff are more than just the role that they deliver as a nurse, doctor, security officer, social worker, occupational therapist, midwife, etc. CHS staff are valued members of our community.

Local level initiatives have included the Emergency Department trial of a short-term violence prediction tool, improved duress activation infrastructure in Ward 7B and a roving security officer presence in the Emergency Department and Dhulwa Mental Health Unit.

CHS has also successfully trialled two additional wards persons in the Adult Mental Health Unit to identify and manage escalating behaviours early. This has resulted in staff feeling safer and a 32 per cent reduction in OV incidents in the Adult Mental Health Unit.

With the completion of the Strategy, CHS has established a new OV Prevention and Management Committee. This Committee is chaired by the CHS CEO and has a broad representation that includes ACT Policing, ACT Ambulance Services and Corrections ACT, as well as WorkSafe ACT, consumer and carer representatives, unions, and of course staff and management from across CHS. This Committee will monitor the implementation of the strategy, with the assistance of a Project Officer, who will commence in the next month.

Next steps include completing the trial of the community duress device for clinical staff who conduct home visits in the community, revising the training that staff receive regarding prevention, management and response to OV and the introduction of a code grey response to incidents of violence.

Early intervention response to incidents of OV is an important area of focus, with the introduction of the code grey into the current emergency code system. The goal of the code grey is to intervene early with a clinically led response team and resolve issues quickly before OV escalates. This work will commence in 2021 once comprehensive code grey planning work has been completed and the revised OV Training program has been implemented.

Thank you to the dedicated staff in CHS for progressing this important work, and for the work they do every day to provide excellent health care for the ACT and surrounding region.

ENDS