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No Cuts To Local Mental Health Services

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton said shadow mental health minister Roger Cook's assertions in last week's edition of the Canning Examiner that an important mental health outpatient care program had been axed at Bentley Hospital were wrong.

"Roger Cook is rapidly gaining a reputation for saying the opposite of what is actually happening," said Dr Nahan.

"There has been no directive to cut staff by 13 per cent. Cuts to frontline mental health services in WA are not acceptable to the State Government and will not be approved."

Dr Nahan said all Area Health Services, including mental health services, have been asked to make necessary changes to meet their 2009/10 budgets without compromising patient care.

"Staff have been asked to identify inefficiencies, duplication and priorities in areas where potential savings could be made, that is all. The outpatient care program at Bentley Hospital will still continue but just in a different configuration," said Dr Nahan.

"Minister Jacobs clearly stated in Parliament last week in answer to a question from Roger Cook that there has been no directive from the Director General of Health or from the Minister for Health or the Minister for Mental Health for any cuts to front-line services."

"The State Government has not neglected mental health at all. It remains a priority and in fact since being elected, the State Government has allocated unprecedented funding increases for a wide range of mental health services that are vital to the community."

Major Mental Health Initiatives by the Liberal/National State Government:

- A full review of the existing Mental Health Act 1996 has been undertaken, which will assist in the drafting of new mental health legislation.
- \$12.3million has been allocated for an expanded facility at Joondalup Health Campus to deliver 42 mental health unit beds. Planning is also underway for new mental health facilities at Sir Charles Gairdner and Osborne Park hospitals.
- \$206.9million has been allocated to support the 2,655 clinical and other staff that care for patients in specialised mental health facilities.
- \$184.7million has been allocated for community mental health services to support a range of community-based services, including emergency assessment and treatment, case management and day programs in clinic or home settings.
- \$14.6million has been allocated for residential mental health care, to fund services contracted from NGOs which provide home type, or nursing home or hostel residential care to persons with long-term mental health conditions.
- \$52.7million has been allocated for the Drug and Alcohol Office's ongoing State-wide network of treatment services, prevention programs and research activities.

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