

JULY 2026

IN THE KNOW

UPDATES FROM VANCOUVER MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES

WHAT'S GOING ON WITH CQI THESE DAYS?

The last couple of months, sites have rolled out the “Telephone and Verbal Orders Management” – a new VCH-wide guideline to provide a clear decision making framework to ensure client safety. In addition VCH and Providence Health Care released “Mental Health Act Form Disclosure” and “Mental Health Act Form Amendments (Correcting Errors)” – new decision support tools to provide clarity on best practices on Mental Health Act forms. Kudos to our educator for creating accompanying teaching slide desks to facilitate these roll outs at the site level.



Working groups have been active in continuing to work on MHSU integration, including accepting clients with primary substance use who are seeking non-medical supports such as counselling. There is ongoing monitoring of the challenges in supporting referrals to the team from community partners, and a small trickle of referrals is starting to come through. More work is needed to support access to this important service. Teams (with the exception of Groundspring which has not yet hired a counsellor) are also working through internal processes to allow access to short-term counselling for clients who meet the team mandate.

What's upcoming?

- There will be another Foundations of Motivational Interviewing workshop available in September over 4 half days.
- EMR and PARIS have updated processes to document 48 hour follow-up after ED presentations or hospital discharge for MH and/or SU reasons. Information about these processes and go-live dates will be coming in the fall, as well as getting back to regular data to feed back to teams to monitor this important clinical work.

TELEPHONE AND VERBAL ORDERS MANAGEMENT GUIDELINE



The “Telephone and Verbal Orders Management” guideline is being rolled out and the target audience is nurses. The guideline outlines when a client specific verbal or telephone order is received by nurses from physicians and NPs, and the read back process steps and documentation.

MENTAL HEALTH ACT FORMS: CORRECTIONS AND ACCESS

In June, MHSU staff received updated guidance about how to correct errors or add missing information on Mental Health Act forms. The goal is to help make sure forms are accurate, changes are made appropriately, and the original information remains clear.



Clients also have the right to ask for copies of most of their Mental Health Act forms. A formal Freedom of Information request is not usually required. Staff can help explain the process, arrange for copies to be provided, and answer questions about the information in the forms. In uncommon situations, some information may need to be reviewed or left out before it is shared to protect someone's privacy or safety.

You may also ask whether your mental health and substance use team can keep a copy in your health record if you are concerned about losing it or keeping it private. Additional steps may need to be followed for requests related to Review Panel hearings or notes from visits with your prescriber.

These updates support accurate records, consistent practice, and clients' rights to understand and access information about their care.



COMING SOON TO A WAITING ROOM NEAR YOU!

The CQI team is working on ways to help clients and families know more about the mental health and substance use services available at the 7 Vancouver Community Adult Mental Health and Substance Use teams. One way of doing this is by making the information readily available for those using our waiting rooms. To do so we are commissioning a poster using a peer-informed strategy. In this context, “peer” is defined as someone with lived or living experience of mental health and/or substance use issues.

We started by engaging a group of peers to help us define the ideal components of an effective and eye-catching poster for this setting, and in our 90-minute focus group they gave us lots of great things to consider. Individual artists who also identify as peers were also gracious with offering suggestions on the process.

Stay tuned for more information on a contest inviting peer artists to help us convey the information in a clear, accessible and engaging way. We are excited to see what they come up with. Please keep an eye out for more information on the contest this fall!

MHSU DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

CQI: continuous quality improvement; a process that encourages MHSU teams to ask the questions, “How are we doing?” and “Can we do it better?”. It is a systematic, long-term method to improve the quality of client care and client outcome.

DST: Decision support tools which contain high levels of evidence and best practices.

EMR and PARIS: electronic medical record (EMR) programs for coordinating services within a site, program or service. Your family doctor is likely already using a version of an EMR in their practice. The goal of using an EMR at VCH is to streamline information and make it accessible to all physicians and staff members integral to a person’s MHSU care.

Freedom of information: the freedom of information (FOI) legislation gives people the right to request access to records held by public bodies. The goal is to promote openness, transparency, and accountability in government, while balancing the need to protect personal privacy and other confidential information.

Mental Health Act: a provincial law in British Columbia that outlines how mental health services are provided and how individuals with severe mental disorders may receive assessment, care, treatment, and protection. It includes guidelines for both voluntary and involuntary admission to designated mental health facilities and is intended to balance access to treatment with the protection of individual rights

MHSU Integration: the process of aligning services, teams, and care pathways to ensure people receive coordinated, and equitable care across the continuum of mental health and substance use supports.

Motivational Interviewing (MI): a collaborative, person-centred communication approach that helps individuals explore and strengthen their own motivation for change. Rather than telling people what they should do, MI uses open-ended questions, reflective listening, and empathy to help them identify their goals, values, and reasons for making positive changes.

VC: Vancouver community services provided by Vancouver Coastal Health

VC Adult MHSU Teams: includes [Three Bridges MHSU](#), [Groundspring MHSU](#), [Grandview Woodland MHSU](#), [North East MHSU](#), [Kitsilano-Pacific MHSU](#), [Raven Song MHSU](#) and [South MHSU](#)

Please visit the [Shared Organizational Portal \(SHOP\)](#) website to view the latest organizational policies and procedures.