BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences
ASIA EDITION

New Zealand introduces new Mental Health Bill

October 3, 2024 | News

Promotes supported decision-making, and aligns with the recovery and well-being model of mental health



The Health Ministry in New Zealand has announced that a new Mental Health Bill has been introduced and is now publicly available.

The purpose of this Act is to provide for compulsory mental health assessment and care in a manner that promotes the decision-making capacity of tÃ?Â•ngata whaiora (people seeking well being), including while they are subject to compulsory care; and improves equity in mental health outcomes among New Zealand's population groups by striving to eliminate mental healthcare disparities.

The Mental Health Bill will repeal the current Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992, which is more than thirty years old and no longer fit for purpose.

The Bill sets out the regime for when a person can be subject to compulsory mental healthcare without their consent.Ã¢â?¬Â¨This is a critical safety net when a person needs urgent intervention as a last resort.

It also introduces far greater protections and safeguards than are currently in place, ensuring people understand what is happening to them and what they're entitled to when they are under the legislation.

Mental health is a priority for the Government, reflected through the establishment of a dedicated ministerial portfolio and a focus on increasing timely access to mental health and addiction services, growing the workforce, strengthening the system's focus on prevention and early intervention and improving the effectiveness of supports.

This Bill is an important step in improving the effectiveness of mental health and addiction support in New Zealand. The next step is for the Bill to have its first reading in Parliament where it will be referred to the Health Select Committee for consideration. Once the Bill is referred to the Health Select Committee it will invite public submissions on the Bill, so members of the public will be able to comment on the Bill before it becomes law.