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New collaboration to boost mental health

A new Wellbeing Collaboration will bring together organisations across south western Sydney working towards the common goal of a physically and mentally healthier community.

The exciting new mental wellbeing initiative was launched by South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) to address anxiety, depression and suicide, and promote positive mental health.

SWSLHD Director of Population Health, Peter Sainsbury said the collaboration was formed to meet priorities set out in the NSW Mental Health Commission's *Strategic Plan for Mental Health in NSW 2014-2024*.

"Many different groups are doing good work in this area, but the Collaboration aims to bring these groups together and provide a focus for co-ordinated and strategic action on wellbeing," Mr Sainsbury said.

"To ensure a holistic approach, the Collaboration includes staff from our mental health and population health teams.

"Together, we will focus on a number of different areas, including high-need populations and communities, and addressing poor physical health in people living with mental illness, their families and carers," he said.

SWSLHD Director of Mental Health Dr Claire Jones said another area of focus for the Collaboration would be the *Five Ways to Wellbeing* strategy.

"The District has adopted the *Five Ways to Wellbeing* strategy, which uses five simple messages to promote mental wellbeing across south western Sydney," Dr Jones said.

"We know that making small changes to the way we live our lives or the way we think about things can make a big improvement to our mental wellbeing.

"The strategy helps us to make these small changes, to cope through difficult times and thrive in everyday life," she said.

Dr Jones said the *Five Ways to Wellbeing* were:

- **Connect** – Talk and listen. Be there, feel connected.
- **Give** – Your time, words, presence.
- **Be Active** – Do what you can. Enjoy what you do. Move your mood.
- **Keep Learning** – Embrace new experiences. See opportunities. Surprise yourself.
- **Take Notice** – Be mindful, appreciate the little things, savour the moment, be here in the moment.

The Wellbeing Collaboration and *Five Ways to Wellbeing* strategy were launched at Liverpool Hospital on 4 May, by NSW Deputy Commissioner for Mental Health, Fay Jackson.