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Friends of India donates \$6000 to Mental Health Unit

A new program aimed at improving the physical health of Liverpool Hospital Mental Health consumers has received a boost thanks to Friends of India, Australia.

The group presented its generous donation to South Western Sydney Local Health District Mental Health Services Director Dr Claire Jones last week.

“This generous donation will be used to purchase physical health assessment equipment, including a bike, specially designed to assess cardio-respiratory fitness in our patients,” Dr Jones said.

“We know that people who suffer severe mental health issues tend to develop metabolic and cardiovascular disease.

“This can be because of their medication and from the effects of the mental illness itself.”

The ability to assess the physical fitness of mental health consumers will allow staff to better tailor exercise programs for consumers’ needs, as well as allowing them to build an evidence-base for future treatment.

Liverpool Hospital Physical Health Coordinator Isabella Sierra said the donation would also pay for a hand grip machine to measure strength, a scale with a capacity of 200kg and a tape measure of up to 200cm.

“First and foremost, we want to reduce the incidence of chronic illness such as cardio-metabolic diseases,” Miss Sierra said.

“In the first instance, we will use this equipment to design a safe exercise program, then measure how effective the program is over time.”

Friends of India Australia started in Liverpool in 1995 and now has around 400 members across Sydney. Past President Shoba Deshikan organised the fundraising event where the money was raised.

“The Liverpool Hospital Mental Health Unit is very close to our hearts,” Ms Deshikan said.

“They provided wonderful support to one of the Friends of India families in their time of need.

“Our focus at Friends of India Australia is to give back to the community and to provide a good example to our younger generations.”