



HACSU

Health & Community
Services Union

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1 September 2021
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Youth mental health workers suffering dangerous new rates of burnout and fatigue, while young Victorians are left waiting.

A new survey of mental health workers looking after young Victorians has shown that the COVID-19 crisis has led to unprecedented rates of burnout and fatigue. 100% of Health & Community Services Union members working in youth mental health report an increase in young people needing mental health care since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Experts have estimated an approximately 30% increase in demand on all mental health services. Like many Victorians, HACSU is deeply concerned about the dramatic increase in young people needing mental health assistance.

Unless an urgent and meaningful investment is made into the workforce, Victorians will continue to sit in waiting rooms and on waiting lists and the sector will continue to shrink due to burnout and fatigue.

On the 20th of May 2021, Minister for Mental Health James Merlino MP stated “Our mental health system has been overburdened and understaffed for far too long.”

The shadow pandemic was with us well before the COVID-19 crisis. Unless our claims—which echo the recommendations of The Royal Commission—are agreed to on staffing, wages and conditions, the Victorian community and the mental health workforce will continue to suffer.

Other results from HACSU’s survey, run 19/08/2021 — 01/09/2021

- 95% of members report they have noticed an increase in acuity since the beginning of the pandemic.
- 97% of members say their service is not coping with the increased rate of young people seeking help
- 95% of members say that staff are leaving their sector at a higher rate than before the pandemic
- 88% of members say that they are working overtime and routinely do double shifts to cope with the increased demand.

Quotes attributable to HACSU State Secretary Paul Healey

“Daniel Andrews calls the mental health sector a broken system. Covid-19 has made an already broken system even worse.”

“HACSU members have been named an ‘essential workforce’ and ‘healthcare heroes’. They’re on the frontline in assisting Victorians with their mental health. But 97% don’t feel that the Victorian Government has listened to them, or even values them. ”

“HACSU and its members are extremely disappointed in the Victorian Government’s inaction to settle the mental health enterprise agreement with it currently being 18 months out of date.”

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