

THE PAMS SERVICE: ADDRESSING CONSUMER CONCERNS AND PRESERVING PROGRAM CONTINUITY

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Funded by DHHS since 2001 and replicated in two other Australian states, the Pharmacotherapy Advocacy Mediation and Support (PAMS) Service operates a confidential, state-wide telephone service providing support, advocacy, mediation, information, education and referral for pharmacotherapy consumers and their direct service providers. The service applies a crisis responsive, problem solving, short-term case management approach. Most cases are initiated by consumers experiencing program related difficulties or concerns. PAMS mediates between consumers and service providers, aiming for 'win-win' outcomes that suit all parties. Overall objectives are program continuity, supporting the service users/service provider relationship and increasing access to treatment.

Systemic advocacy is another component of PAMS as evidenced by our participation in reviews of the Victorian Pharmacotherapy Policy (aka the 'Guidelines') and the effective partnerships we have formed with the five recently established Pharmacotherapy Area Based Networks (PABN's).

This presentation will outline some of the current issues and concerns raised by Victorian pharmacotherapy consumers as well as demonstrating the vital role of an independent advocacy service like PAMS in resolving consumer issues within the Victorian pharmacotherapy model.