

# **LONDON HEALTH EMERGENCY**

## ***The Health Watchdog***

16<sup>th</sup> February 2009

Dear Colleague,

### **PROPOSED CLOSURE OF AL3 WARD AT THE MAUDSLEY HOSPITAL**

I am writing to draw your attention to proposals which are currently out to consultation which would result in the closure of Aubrey Lewis 3 ward at the Maudsley Hospital with the loss of 11 much-needed, acute adult mental health beds.

The proposal has been put forward in order to achieve "Cost Improvement" savings of £400,000 from the Lambeth budget for adult, inpatient mental health services. It is clear from the consultation paper that this is a cash-led exercise with serious implications for adult mental health capacity, which will have an impact across south east London.

There is a consensus amongst mental health professionals and politicians that recessions lead to an increased demand for mental health services. Loss of jobs and homes, and the daily grind of debt-pressures, can all be triggers for a breakdown. Against that background it is appalling that any mental health capacity could be considered for closure.

London Health Emergency is working with staff organisations at South London and Maudsley to oppose these cuts and to make sure that everyone is aware of the consequences. We believe that £400,000 is peanuts compared to the billions spent on the bank bail-outs. Staff are already reporting increased demand for inpatient beds and there is a real fear that patients will end up in expensive private sector units – costing the NHS a fortune in fees and making a nonsense of the proposed savings.

Time is tight. We have until the 4<sup>th</sup> March to stop these ill-conceived closure plans. We also hear that there may be further cuts in the pipeline so we need to act quickly. Contact Ms Lou Hellard at Room 273, Reay House, Lambeth Hospital, Landor Road SW9 9NT or email her your objections to [lou.hellard@slam.nhs.uk](mailto:lou.hellard@slam.nhs.uk) and raise the issue with your MP and Councillor – these cuts must be stopped.

Yours sincerely,

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