

MI124211

Mr N Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 1 October 2004, on behalf of Mr G Savige, regarding the Mental Health Association of Queensland [MHA(Q)] Gold Coast Branch, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Fibromyalgia and research into Huntington's Disease.

As requested, the following response is provided for E-Petition No: 338-04.

Thank you for the E-Petition dated 17 September 2004 regarding the Mental Health Association of Queensland [MHA(Q)] Gold Coast Branch.

Queensland Health recently finalised an Invitation for Offer (IFO) process to allocate funding for the Mental Health Grants to Non-government Organisations for the period up to 30 June 2007. There was an overwhelming response to the IFO with over \$20 million dollars per annum requested from over 80 organisations.

As a result, Queensland Health allocated \$6.9 million per annum to non-government organisations, of which MHA(Q) secured over \$500,000 per annum to deliver a number of projects across Queensland, including the Gold Coast. Queensland Health also offered an extension of funding for the MHA(Q) Gold Coast Branch for the period up to 30 June 2005.

In addressing the increasing demand on mental health care funding, it is difficult to meet requests for funding assistance within a finite funding pool. The Department acknowledges that community-based organisations such as MHA(Q) play a vital link in providing treatment and prevention programs to assist people with a mental illness within their local communities. To demonstrate this, the Department has allocated supplementation funding to mental health community-based organisations for the past four years. In addition, the Department will continue to work with MHA(Q) to assist the organisation to prioritise service activities across the State within the available resources. MHA(Q), however, is ultimately responsible for deciding the level and geographic coverage of services and the allocation of funds to those services, including the Gold Coast.

As requested, the following response is provided for E-Petition No: 287-04.

Thank you for the E-Petition regarding Chronic Fatigue Syndrome / Fibromyalgia.

The service agreement between Queensland Health and ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome /Fibromyalgia Association of QLD Inc. expired on the 30 June 2004. An offer to extend the service agreement was made by Queensland Health, but this offer was refused by the organisation as they were experiencing viability issues.

Queensland Health has since made an offer to the ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and FM Support Association Toowoomba Inc. to enter into a three year service agreement. The Organisation has accepted the offer and currently receives \$8,436 per annum.

Queensland Health has also made a one-off payment of \$3,000 to the ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and FM Support Association Toowoomba Inc. to assist with set up costs to better meet the needs of its clients.

Queensland Health is mindful of the difficulties faced by community organisations in providing services with finite resources. As you would be aware, the Department receives numerous requests for funding assistance within a finite funding pool. In addressing the increasing demand on health care funding, it is sometimes difficult to meet funding requests from non-government organisations when they are considered in the context of health and government priorities.

Due to competing demands for health services, I regret that Queensland Health is unable to meet this funding request for a part time manager for the ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome /Fibromyalgia Association of QLD Inc.

In relation to your request to establish a clinic, consisting of at least 2 physicians, 2 nurses and 2 physiotherapists, in a major hospital to treat chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia patients, I advise that, people who suffer from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and/or Fibromyalgia can seek medical treatment at any Queensland Health hospital. Staff including Doctors, Allied Health Professionals and Nurses are able to provide treatment and assistance to patients suffering from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and/or Fibromyalgia.

All Doctors and Nurses working in the public health system receive a basic understanding of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome whilst completing their qualifications. Clinical staff have access to the latest research and information to update their knowledge and skill base to better understand the needs of patients.

As requested, the following response is provided for E-Petition No: 320-04.

Thank you for the E-Petition regarding funding for medical research into Huntington's Disease.

Queensland Health supports a range of services to address the needs of people affected by Huntington's Disease. These services may be funded directly or indirectly. In addition to providing clinical services ranging from genetic testing to specialist treatment, Queensland Health staff support efforts to better understand this uncommon but severely debilitating disease. Queensland Health also promotes the utilisation of research into evidence-based practice and has invested in increasing staff access to published research.

Queensland Health funds the Australian Huntington's Disease Association (Qld) Inc \$115,020 per financial year to provide information, support and day respite for people affected by Huntington's disease and their families. Queensland Health has been providing funds to the Association for more than 10 years and has recently renegotiated a service agreement until 30 June 2007.

Yours sincerely

GORDON NUTTALL MP
Minister for Health
Member for Sandgate