



# INCLUSION OF 1 x PSYCHIATRIST AND/OR PSYCHIATRIC NURSE IN LEVEL 2 HOSPITAL AND ABOVE

Secretariat Issue Paper #17

Issue Paper Theme: **Medical**

## BACKGROUND

Currently there are 12 peacekeeping missions operated by the United Nations. A total of 87,502 personnel is deployed as of November 2021 in these missions. At present, as per COE Manual only the staffing table of Level 3 has a psychiatrist as a mandatory component of its medical staff (Chapter 3, Annex C, Appendix 6). Mental health is an important aspect of overall health of an individual. Nearly 14 percent of the total loss of man days lost is due to issues related mental health. Working in any UN Mission is a stressful job and hence greater attention needs to be given to the mental health of uniformed personnel.

The High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) report recommends improved medical and health care for peace operations is required and is in the interest of all personnel and contributing countries.

The Uniformed Capabilities Support Division (UCSD) has recently completed phase one of the Comprehensive Study to Develop a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Framework for Uniformed Personnel which has recommended that, upon approval by the General Assembly, the Secretariat develop action plans to implement a sustainable and appropriate framework for the management of PTSD in peacekeeping operations. DHMOSH has also begun the process of developing a comprehensive overarching Mental Health Strategy for Uniformed Peacekeepers. This would entail detailed assessments and management strategies from pre-deployment, during deployment and even post deployment phases.

Having a psychiatrist and/or psychiatric nurse at a Level 2 hospital will help provide comprehensive preventive as well as early intervention in case of mental health issues, thereby avoiding loss of valuable manpower.

### **Definition of Psychiatrist**

A psychiatrist is an essential member, often the leader, of the mental health care team. Psychiatrists are also essential for training and providing support and supervision to primary health care providers in mental health care. S/He has a post-graduate degree in psychiatry.

### **Definition of Psychiatric Nurse**

A psychiatric nurse is a graduate from a recognized university with specialization in mental health. S/He is registered at the local nursing board (or equivalent) and works in a mental health care setting. A psychiatric nurse



is an important member of a mental health care team. S/He is essential for community care services. With a growing emphasis on community-based care in mental health care, there will be a need for more psychiatric nurses.

Provisioning of frontline professional mental health care workers (psychiatrist and/or psychiatric nurse) would prevent unnecessary evacuation/repatriations/loss of valuable manpower as professional mental health support nearer to the workplace is likely to diminish long term morbidity, thereby leading to lesser claims burden to the Organization.

## PROPOSAL

It is proposed to have a psychiatrist and/or psychiatric nurse at level 2 hospitals as per requirement. Amendment is suggested in relevant text of the COE manual: Chapter 3, Annex C, Appendix 5 – Staffing requirements: to add 1 x psychiatrist or/and 1 x psychiatric nurse, if required. In this case, the total of staff for a Level 2 (basic) hospital will increase to 58 personnel.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposal translates into an additional personnel cost of US\$ 1,448 a month for each Level 2 hospital wherever a psychiatrist or a psychiatric nurse will be deployed.

## PREVIOUS HISTORY

This proposal has not been previously submitted to the COE Working Group for consideration.