

## APPENDIX 2: MENTAL HEALTH (COMPULSORY ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT) ACT 1992

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This is a resource available for the management of mentally ill patients who are suicidal or seriously incapacitated in their self care, if their mental disorder falls within the definition of mental disorders in the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992. Duly Authorised Officers (DAOs) are available to provide information and assistance to patients and their families where compulsory assessment or treatment under the Act is being considered.

If the patient is voluntary, whether in the community or in hospital, application can be made under section 8. If the resulting examination under section 10 of the Act finds that the patient should undergo compulsory treatment, then treatment can take place even if the patient cannot or will not consent, subject to the provisions of the Act. If the person is in the community, the DAO may seek police assistance if necessary (section 41). Similarly if the police are called to a situation where a person “is acting in a manner which gives rise to reasonable belief that he or she may be mentally disordered”, the police may take the person to hospital, police station or surgery for a psychiatric assessment. This may lead to a section 8 application under the Act.

The purpose of the DAO is to allow a more easily accessed “door” into the compulsory treatment provisions of the Mental Health Act. The DAOs are experienced mental health professionals who act as front line operators of the Mental Health Act. Their role is to provide advice and assistance with assessments of whether compulsory treatment is required, to receive applications and to facilitate assessment, and they may provide assistance with transport to hospital. DAOs can be contacted by phoning the local Mental Health Team. The Mental Health Team can be contacted through your local hospital.

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