



THE MALTA CHAMBER

## PRESS RELEASE

28<sup>th</sup> October 2021

### Recommendations for Better Mental Health Services in Malta

#### *The Malta Chamber's Mental Health Policy Paper*

The Malta Chamber's Health & Wellness Committee has just published its Recommendations for Improvements in Mental Health Services in Malta. The effect of the pandemic on vulnerable persons cannot be ignored and reports from employers on emergency response show that the situation can still be better managed. The document calls for community-based mental healthcare for early intervention as well as increased investment in emergency services and short-term improvement in certain areas of Mount Carmel Hospital. While acknowledging government's future plans for a new mental health hospital and for rental of space for acute care, the short-term recommendations highlight certain areas which still require improvement.

The document emphasizes the importance of appropriate care in the sensitive initial stages of a crisis. Ideally family doctors guide people to overcome stigma into pre-emptive layers of community care to reduce the quantity of acute mental health crises. Some community mental health teams exist but need resourcing and Gozo has complete an absence of such resources.

The Chamber argues that acute psychiatric evaluation including hospital admission should be directed through a psychiatric team at Mater Dei Accident and Emergency and Crisis intervention should be led by Public Health and supported by the Police Force (possibly not uniformed) rather than the other way around. Recommendations for the improvements at Mount Carmel especially in the areas of security and other infrastructure and increased investment in HR are included. The avoidance of mixing of chronic and acute patients and access to information and communication as well as to outside space are made.

Chairperson of the Health & Wellness Committee, Catherine Calleja, states "COVID-19 has exacerbated levels of work-related stress and isolation felt by workers in various sectors. Business owners recognize that positive initiatives in this field from government as investment in a better society and better business alike. Psychiatric patients have the same right to excellent care standards as other patients."

---

END