



BLACK DOG INSTITUTE

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For immediate release

PORT LEADS THE WAY WITH DIAGNOSING DEPRESSION

Port Macquarie is the first rural centre in New South Wales to have available a world first assessment and diagnostic program that assists in the assessment and diagnosis of mood disorders such as depression and bipolar disorder.

The Mood Assessment Program (or MAP) is the brainchild of the Black Dog Institute and provides health professionals with the know-how of highly skilled mood disorder specialists.

“The MAP is a computerised assessment and diagnostic program incorporating nearly a quarter of a century of sophisticated clinical expertise in the assessment, diagnosis and management planning for people suffering depression and bipolar disorders,” said Professor Gordon Parker, Executive Director of the Black Dog Institute.

The Institute, located on the grounds of the Prince of Wales Hospital at Randwick in Sydney, was funded by the NSW Government to pilot the MAP in a variety of settings across NSW.

The first three of these MAP Centres were established in Sydney. The Black Dog Institute is now working in partnership with the Hastings Macleay General Practice Network to establish a MAP Centre in Port Macquarie

Dr David Gregory, Chair, of the Hastings Macleay General Practice Network said, "The Hastings Macleay General Practice Network welcomes the opportunity to host this ground breaking service in our area. The Network is a provider of support services to General Practice and this will specifically assist in the mental health area".

The service will open its doors for business from Monday March 1st and has been warmly welcomed by local health professionals as an important step in

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improving the diagnosis and treatment of mood disorders for patients in the Hastings Macleay area.

Local doctor Fares Samara said, “The distance we have to the nearest major centres, and the short supply of psychiatrists and general practitioners makes this program invaluable to assist busy GPs in diagnosing and treating complex mental health conditions such as depression and bipolar disorder”.

HOW IT WORKS

The MAP is a computer program that has been developed by the Black Dog Institute to assist health professionals in the diagnosis and treatment of depression and other mood disorders. By completing the MAP, patients are able to provide their referring health professional with information that will assist in the development of a treatment plan specifically for each individual patient.

“It is important to understand that everyone’s experience of depression is different” said Professor Parker. “By completing the MAP patients are able to provide their referring health professional with information that will assist in making a diagnosis and developing a tailored treatment plan unique to each patient’s experience of their mood disorder”.

To be eligible to undertake a MAP assessment patients must first obtain a referral from their GP. The patient then attends the MAP Centre where they spend approximately one hour entering information into a computer program. Based on this detailed information, the computer generates a detailed report for the referring health professional. Treatment suggestions are also provided to the referring doctor. There is no cost to the patient for undertaking a MAP assessment.

The MAP provides sophisticated information to the referring doctor that otherwise could only be provided by a highly skilled mood disorders specialist. The information is presented in a format that can be readily used by the doctor and their patient.

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