

Business Reporter: Bringing capital investment, efficiency and creativity to the table

How could independent sector providers help turn mental health care around?

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, December 7, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Chief Executive of a leading healthcare company has aired his expert view on how independent sector providers can assist the NHS in tackling the current mental health crisis.

The gap between mental health resources and demand is growing rapidly. While the Mental Health Foundation has forecast that by 2030 approximately two million more adults in the UK will have mental health problems due to population growth, the London School of Economics has estimated that currently just a quarter of people with mental health problems receive any treatment.

In an article published on Business Reporter, Dr Tony Romero, Chief Executive of Cygnet Health Care which operates 150 services for individuals with mental health needs, learning disabilities and autism across the UK, has given his opinion on how the NHS and the independent sector can come together to prevent the problem from escalating.

Dr Romero believes the first step is to invest in high-quality prevention services and comprehensive community care.

He said: "Meeting the challenge must now be a priority for all concerned, from frontline politicians to those working across the health and social care sector. Making progress requires action across multiple areas. We need to encourage people to take good care of their mental health on a day-to-day basis. We need to invest in high-quality prevention services, and in comprehensive community care. And we need to be clear about the role that inpatient mental health care should play.

"The government must focus more resources on prevention, as well as enhancing the availability of mental health support through expansion and transformation of mental health services. In developing and implementing any ideas, however, it makes sense to work with independent sector providers of NHS mental health services, who have always delivered a large proportion of NHS mental health care."

Dr Romero added further that what independent providers can bring to the table is some fresh

thinking and creative ideas, especially regarding recruitment and retaining of staff. For example, Cygnet Health Care has pioneered the use of nurse associates in mental health care to help address staff shortages. Dr Romero also urges the NHS to optimise its use of flexible staffing.

He said: "Rather than competing with one another for the same small pool of agency staff, we can work alongside our partners across the sector to form region-wide staff banks, from which we can draw staff when there is a need. Doing so would also have the advantage of ensuring good standards of staffing, and offer opportunities for training which are unavailable to those who work unplanned agency shifts."

Another key area where independent providers can help is empowering the families of mental health patients by offering access to resources and support, which can significantly improve relapse rates after discharge. This is currently a "massive piece of the jigsaw which is missing" according to Dr Romero.

"If you have a fractured hip, you get crutches, physiotherapy and advice on how to make the best of your condition," he explained. "If your child bumps their head, you get sent home with information telling you what to watch out for. If you are caring for a loved one who has had surgery, the community nurse will show you how to change a dressing.

"We need to replicate that approach in mental health. Currently, there is a lot of training and support available for a physical illness but not for a mental health condition. We need to change that."

To learn more about how Tony feels the independent sector can help tackle the current mental health crisis, [read the article](#).

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Cygnet Health Care

Cygnet Health Care, a subsidiary of Universal Health Services, is an independent provider of mental health services operating over 150 centres with more than 2,500 beds across the UK. Its expert and highly dedicated care team of 10 500 employees support 2800 individuals across 147 services to consistently make a positive difference to their lives.

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