

Episode of care—mental health legal status, code N

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Episode of care—mental health legal status, code N

Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Element
Short name:	Mental health legal status
METEOR identifier:	727343
Registration status:	Health! , Standard 20/01/2021
Definition:	Whether a person is treated on an involuntary basis under the relevant state or territory mental health legislation: at any time during an episode of admitted patient care or an episode of residential care, or at the time of contact for treatment as a patient/client by a community based service, as represented by a code.
Data Element Concept:	Episode of care—mental health legal status
Value Domain:	Mental health legal status code N

Value domain attributes

Representational attributes

Representation class:	Code
Data type:	Number
Format:	N
Maximum character length:	1

	Value	Meaning
Permissible values:	1	Involuntary patient
	2	Voluntary patient
Supplementary values:	9	Not reported/unknown

Collection and usage attributes

Guide for use:	CODE 1 Involuntary patient
	Involuntary patient should only be recorded where detention or compulsory mental health treatment has been provided to the patient under the relevant legislation of the state or territory providing the care. This includes legislation relating to forensic mental health patients. Legislation relating to forensic patients may be separate to state and territory Mental Health Acts.
	CODE 2 Voluntary patient
	Voluntary patient should be recorded where the patient is not considered to be an involuntary patient under the mental health legislation for the state or territory providing the care.
	CODE 9 Not reported/unknown
	This code is to be used if the mental health legal status for the patient is either not reported or unknown.

Data element attributes

Collection and usage attributes

Guide for use:

While legislation differs between each state and territory, all Australian jurisdictions have legislation which provides for compulsory detention or compulsory treatment of patients for mental health-related conditions. Each state/territory health authority has identified which sections of their legislation provide for the detention or compulsory treatment of the patient and codes treatment delivered under the provisions of this legislation as involuntary status.

The mental health legal status of admitted patients may change many times throughout the episode of care.

Patients may be admitted to hospital on an involuntary basis and subsequently be changed to voluntary status; some patients are admitted as voluntary but are transferred to involuntary status during the hospital stay. Multiple changes between voluntary and involuntary status during an episode of care in hospital or treatment in the community may occur depending on the patient's clinical condition and their capacity to consent to treatment.

The mental health legal status of residents treated within residential care services may also change on multiple occasions throughout the episode of residential care or residential stay.

As with admitted and residential services, the mental health legal status of patients/clients treated by a community based service may also change over time, and may change between service contacts.

Approval is required under the state or territory mental health legislation in order to detain patients in hospital for the provision of compulsory mental health care or for patients to be treated compulsorily in the community.

Collection methods:

Admitted patients are to be reported as involuntary if the patient is involuntary at any time during the episode of care.

Residents in **residential mental health services** are to be reported as involuntary if the resident is involuntary at any time during the episode of residential care.

Patients of ambulatory mental health care services are to be reported as involuntary if the patient is involuntary at the time of a service contact.

Comments:

This data element is used to monitor trends in the use of compulsory treatment provisions under state and territory mental health legislation by Australian hospitals and community health care facilities, including 24-hour community based residential services. For those hospitals and community mental health services which provide psychiatric treatment to involuntary patients, mental health legal status information is an inherent metadata item within local health information systems.

Relational attributes

Related metadata references:

Supersedes [Episode of care—mental health legal status, code N Health!](#), Superseded 20/01/2021
[Tasmanian Health](#), Standard 19/06/2020

Implementation in Data Set Specifications:

[Admitted patient care NMDS 2021–22](#)

[Health!](#), Superseded 20/10/2021

Implementation start date: 01/07/2021

Implementation end date: 30/06/2022

[Admitted patient care NMDS 2022–23](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 20/10/2021

Implementation start date: 01/07/2022

Implementation end date: 30/06/2023

[Community mental health care NMDS 2021–22](#)

[Health!](#), Superseded 17/12/2021

Implementation start date: 01/07/2021

Implementation end date: 30/06/2022

[Community mental health care NMDS 2022–23](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 17/12/2021

Implementation start date: 01/07/2022

Implementation end date: 30/06/2023

[Residential mental health care NMDS 2021–22](#)

[Health!](#), Superseded 17/12/2021

Implementation start date: 01/07/2021

Implementation end date: 30/06/2022

[Residential mental health care NMDS 2022–23](#)

[Health!](#), Standard 17/12/2021

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