

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30/31 May 2011

Question: E11-292

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: TELEPHONE COUNSELLING

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

How does the portal differ from the previous telephone counselling programme?

Answer:

The existing telephone and web-based counselling services funded under the Mental Health – Telephone Counselling, Self Help and Web-Based Support Programmes measure is ongoing. The measure will continue to fund evidence-based telephone and online mental health programs to supplement or substitute for existing face-to-face services for individuals with high prevalence mental health disorders or those in psychosocial crisis.

The new national online portal announced in the 2011-12 Budget will create a single gateway to mental health treatment and information for consumers and practitioners. It will bring together the various telephone and online mental health programs (including those already funded by the Commonwealth under the above measure), self help and interactive screening tools, other services and information under an easily identifiable and easy to navigate website. The portal will mean that people can access mental health services and information without having to know precisely what they need, or needing any assumed knowledge. These online services will be independently evaluated for their efficacy and safety.

The portal will also provide links to information and existing services structured to meet the needs of consumers, practitioners and carers, wanting either general information about mental health disorders, available services and treatments programs according to a person's location and needs.