

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30/31 May 2011

Question: E11-049

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: TELEPHONE AND ON-LINE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Written Question on Notice

Senator Adams asked:

What Programmes are in place to provide telephone or on-line counselling sessions with the same (ongoing) mental health worker for people requiring mental health support in rural and remote areas?

Answer:

The Government funds a range of telephone counselling and interactive on-line supports for people with mental health issues through the *Telephone Counselling, Self Help and Online Support Programmes* measure and the *Online Rural Counselling for Young Australians* program. Recent improvements to the delivery of services by providers include the following flexible access and support options:

- ongoing telephone counselling for young people (those who have agreed to provide a pseudonym when they call back to ensure that they can speak with the same counsellor);
- cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for young people, delivered by the same allied health professional via email or live webchat; and
- online therapist-assisted CBT delivered to Australians of all ages, by the same allied health professional, over a series of sessions.

These telephone counselling and interactive on-line supports are available to all Australians, including those living in rural or remote locations.

Access to these existing services will be enhanced with the creation of a new national online portal as part of the Government's 2011-12 mental health Budget package.