

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 30 & 31 May and 1 June 2012

Question: E12- 191

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: Mental Health and Complex Trauma

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 1

Senator: Senator Wright

Question:

Two thirds of patients presenting to mental health services have experienced childhood sexual or physical abuse. Research shows that with the right programs adults who have experienced complex trauma from childhood can recover. Has there been any specific allocation of funds to complex trauma services?

Answer:

The Department does not have a specific program for adults who have experienced complex trauma from childhood. Adults who have experienced complex trauma from childhood may benefit from the following programs:

- *Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS).* The ATAPS initiative enables general practitioners (GPs) to refer consumers to allied health professionals who deliver focused psychological strategies. Allied health professionals under ATAPS have been defined to include psychologists, social workers, mental health nurses, occupational therapists and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers with specific mental health qualifications.
- *Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners.* This initiative includes a range of Medicare rebateable services for eligible people with an assessed mental disorder, including psychological strategies provided by appropriately qualified mental health professionals.
- *Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program (MHNIP).* This program is structured so that mental health nurses work in collaboration with private psychiatrists and general practitioners to provide services such as periodic reviews of patients' mental status and medication monitoring and management. MHNIP ensures that patients with severe and persistent mental illness in the private health system receive adequate case management, outreach support and coordinated care.
- *The Mindhealthconnect e-mental health portal.* The portal was launched on 10 July 2012 and brings together and consolidates the websites and telephone services currently available and provides an additional avenue to traditional face-to-face services. The portal can be found at www.mindhealthconnect.org.au.

In addition, the Department provided \$125,127 (GST inclusive) to Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA) in June 2011 to develop a best practice guidance manual to address complex trauma in adult survivors of child abuse.

The manual aims to assist service providers to improve the care and management of adult survivors of child abuse, and may be a useful resource for the mental health and social care sector. The manual is currently being finalised and is expected to be available later in 2012.