

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: E12-193

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:

What provision has been made to train GPs in identifying and responding to trauma in patients who present with different physical and mental health presentations?

Answer:

The Australian Government funds a number of mental health initiatives to assist GPs which includes training in mental health diagnosis and treatment and may also include training in the identification and response to trauma presentations.

Under the Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners through the Medicare Benefits Schedule (Better Access) initiative, funding is available for education and training activities to help ensure GPs are equipped to recognise and treat mental illness.

Programs include:

- the Mental Health Professionals Network which supports local networks of multi-disciplinary mental health clinicians, including GPs. These clinicians are also able to hear from leading mental health experts and carer and consumer representatives through a series of web based seminars, on topics of clinical interest to the mental health workforce;
- the Mental Health Standards Collaboration, which develops, monitors and promotes quality standards for GP education and training in primary mental health care; and
- the Mental Health Professionals Online Development (MHPOD) Program. MHPOD is an innovative web-based professional education tool which provides approximately seventy hours of material on fifty topics.

Under the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care program, the Australian Government funds the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners to provide the GP Psych Support Service. This service provides GPs with access to advice from a psychiatrist on management options for individuals with mental health issues. This may include management advice for individuals presenting with mental health issues associated with trauma. Advice is provided within 24 hours of the request, or within 48 hours where the request relates to specialised drug and alcohol or child and adolescent mental health matters.

On 29 June 2011 the Department executed a funding agreement with allocated funding of \$125, 127 (GST inclusive) with Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ACSA) 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 late in 2012.