

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: E12-389

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: Progress on implementation of the 2011-12 budget measures

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Senator Fierravanti-Wells

Question:

- a) What is the progress of the government's \$2 billion mental health package it announced last year?
- b) How much has been spent and on what? For e.g., what has been opened or set up etc.

Answer:

a) to b)

The Government is delivering on its commitment to make mental health a priority, with recent investment totalling \$2.2 billion over five years from 2011-12. The reforms are focused on improving the lives of thousands of Australians experiencing mental illness through better detection, better targeting and better coordination. Good progress has been made in implementation so far, with the vast majority of milestones identified in the National Health Reform – Progress and Delivery Plan (the Purple Book) having been met. So far the Government's achievements include:

- developing 15 new headspace locations as announced in October 2011, and announcing another 15 in August 2012. The average funding each existing headspace site receives has also been almost doubled;
- providing increased funding of \$205.9 million over five years, progressively flowing from 1 July 2011 for the Access to Allied Psychological Services measure to target hard to reach groups;
- establishing an expert group in child mental health in September 2011 to inform the implementation of the 3 year old health check, which is anticipated to be available from 1 January 2013;
- in March 2012, exceeding the 2011-12 expansion target of 600 participating schools for the KidsMatter Primary initiative;
- the expansion of the youth Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Centre (EPPIC) measure, with service development planning currently underway for centres in four

jurisdictions following the first call for expressions of interest late last year, and a second round to commence later this year;

- establishing the new National Mental Health Commission on 1 January 2012;
- agreement by COAG in April 2012 of the National Partnership Agreement Supporting National Mental Health Reform and subsequent publishing of state implementation plans detailing 17 projects to be undertaken by states and territories in June 2012;
- creating a mental health Consumer Reference Group that will work together with its auspice body, the Mental Health Council of Australia, to establish a new national mental health consumer peak organisation to provide a strong and consolidated voice for mental health consumers. The first meeting of this group will be held on 30-31 August 2012;
- providing funding of \$7.4 million over 5 years through the National Health and Medical Research Council for three mental health Centres of Research Excellence, announced on 2 August 2012. These centres will focus on suicide prevention, substance abuse and better mental health planning;
- tackling suicide through a range of measures including providing free calls from mobiles to Lifeline, under the Taking Action to Tackle Suicide Package, which commenced 1 July 2011; and
- launching the e-mental health portal, *mindhealthconnect* which went live on 29 June 2012.

Several other elements of the package fall within the responsibility of the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Progress on those elements includes:

- completion of the second stage of the Personal Helpers and Mentors service, with 48 expanded sites being announced by the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon Jenny Macklin MP, on 16 June 2012;
- announcement by Minister Macklin on 16 July 2012 of the outcome of selection of 11 new Family Mental Health Support services; and
- execution of the funding agreement between partner organisations and Flinders University for the development of the Social Engagement and Emotional Development survey for children aged 8 to 14 years.

The Department of Health and Ageing's financial statements for 2011-12 are currently being audited by the Australian National Audit Office. Detail on the expenditure to date of measures under the Budget package will be provided in the Annual report which is due to be tabled in October.