

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30 May 2011

Question: E11-546

OUTCOME 4: Aged Care and Population Ageing

Topic: NATIONAL CONTINENCE HELPLINE

Hansard Page: CA 74

Senator FIFIELD asked:

- a) Could you take on notice how many calls the Continence helpline has received each month since it was established and also a breakdown, if you have it, of the issues raised? There might be particular categories that the issues are put into.
- b) Also as part of that answer could you provide the nature of the details which the department collects from the calls to the helpline?

Answer:

a) and b)

The National Continence Helpline (NCHL) has been in existence since 1998 and is currently a key initiative of the Bladder Bowel Collaborative (BBC) project which is run by the Continence Foundation of Australia (CFA). Staffed by qualified Continence Nurse Advisors, the NCHL provides free and confidential advice to people at risk of, affected by, or caring for someone with incontinence.

Data capturing the number of calls received each month since the NCHL was established is not available. However, Table 1 provides a breakdown of the calls received each calendar year since the helpline was established and shows the increasing awareness and profile of the NCHL and the CFA.

Table 1: NCHL episodes by calendar year 1998-2010 (episodes refers to completed calls, faxes and online orders)

YEAR	EPISODES
1998	1,462
1999	7,528
2000	8,142
2001	12,930
2002	15,005
2003	14,451
2004	15,096
2005	17,564
2006	18,766
2007	17,946
2008	21,234
2009	21,793
2010	29,452

The 'Reason for the Call' is a new category for data captured under the NCHL and therefore the data available is from September 2010 to December 2010. From this data, over one third of callers (36.2 per cent) contacted the NCHL for information or clarification related to financial assistance. Other reasons for calls or issues raised include:

- ordering of resources (14.3 per cent);
- seeking advice on continence issue (14.2 per cent);
- referral information (11 per cent); and
- treatment and management advice (9.9 per cent).