

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016

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OUTCOME: 5 - Primary Health Care

Topic: Pregnancy, Birth and Baby Hotline

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Senator: Moore, Claire

Question:

Part of the process was a pregnancy, birth and baby hotline that was available for services. I think that is through the maternity plan. One of the elements of the work they did was around breastfeeding. They took a lot of calls on that. It was expanded on 3 December to look at parenting issues around kids up to five years of age, taking it away from the infant focus to the early childhood focus. Can I just get some information about that change and what the difference is going to be.

Answer:

Healthdirect Australia Ltd commenced the Enhanced Pregnancy, Birth and Baby (PBB) service on 1 December 2015.

The Enhanced PBB service delivers access to trusted pregnancy, birthing, postnatal care and parenting information (for children up to the age of 5 years) via the PBB Web Portal and PBB helpline.

Prior to the changes to the service on 1 December 2015, all calls were answered by a customer service representative who was not clinically trained. Calls are now answered by Maternal Child Health Nurses who are experienced in pregnancy and early childhood health from infancy. This allows for an increased number of PBB callers to speak to appropriately qualified health professionals. Those needing health advice or emotional support are 'Warm Transferred' to the Nurse Triage Service or a Counsellor respectively.

General counselling services are available for callers experiencing emotional distress, or with general pregnancy, birthing, postnatal and parenting issues up until the child is aged 5 years. In addition, Counsellors provide non-directive counselling for pregnancy-related questions. Counsellors are also able to refer and / or transfer callers to other services as appropriate.

The focus of the service remains on the child bearing spectrum from pregnancy through birth and supporting parents until their child is 5 years old. The website content is evenly distributed across all periods within the parenthood journey. It supports parents, including those who are expecting, in their decision making around their health and the health, growth and development of their child/ren.

Parents now have a service that supports them through the early childhood years.