

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2013-14, 5/6 & 7 June 2013

Question: E13-118

OUTCOME: 11 - Mental Health

Topic: Early Intervention and Mental Health

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Fierravanti-Wells

Question:

To what extent does the Department accept that awareness and early interventions can save lives, families, money and reduce the ever-growing demand on scarce clinical services?

Answer:

The importance of increasing awareness and early intervention in reducing the effects of mental illness are the focus of several programmes managed by the Department of Health and Ageing that focus on raising community awareness, reducing stigma associated with mental illness and providing support for Australians experiencing mental health issues before they progress to mental illness. These include:

- *beyondblue* initiatives, which aim to raise awareness of depression, anxiety and other mental health disorders, and reduce the stigma associated with seeking help for mental health concerns;
- the National Suicide Prevention Programme, which provides funding to non-government organisations to contribute to community awareness and suicide prevention by supporting broad population health approaches and targeted assistance to groups identified at higher risk of suicide;
- *headspace*, which provides a national coordinated focus on youth mental health and related drug and alcohol problems and aims to improve access for young people aged 12-25 years to appropriate services and ensure better coordination between services;
- the early psychosis prevention and intervention initiative, which will support young people experiencing first episode psychosis and improve the life trajectory for these young people and their families;
- KidsMatter for primary schools and MindMatters for secondary schools, which support activities which contribute to improve the mental health and wellbeing of primary and secondary students nationally; and

- the Teleweb (the Telephone, Counseling, Self Help and Web-based Support Programmes), measure which provides telephone and online mental health programmes for individuals with common mental health disorders and those in psychosocial crisis.