

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-11, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-341

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: YOUTH SERVICES

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

The Government has promised to deliver 30 new headspace sites

- a) Can you provide details of where these sites will be located?
- b) How many will be situated in outer metropolitan areas? How many in regional Australia?
- c) How many of these new headspace centres will be specifically created to address Indigenous people needing mental health services?
- d) What is the timetable for the completion of these 30 centres - when will young people desperately in need of early intervention and diagnosis be able to start using these services?
- e) Can you provide a breakdown of costs associated with each new headspace centre as I'm sure they will differ depending on location and demand?
- f) How many new headspace services will be servicing young Australians by 2013 - just how many years are young people in need going to wait for you to fulfil your election promises?
- g) The Government claims up to 20,000 young people will access these new services - can you tell the Committee what the demand is among young Australians for mental health services?
- h) Does the Australian Government believe Professor Pat McGorry is wrong when he says we need a total of 90-100 headspaces to meet demand?

Answer:

a and b)

The Government has committed new funding of \$78.8 million under the *More Youth Friendly Mental Health Services* 2010 Budget measure to, in part, deliver up to 30 new headspace sites.

The locations of the first ten new headspace sites were announced by the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon MP, on 24 July 2010. The locations are:

- Parramatta (NSW)
- Shoalhaven (NSW)
- Bendigo (VIC)
- Collingwood (VIC)
- Brisbane South – Inala (QLD)
- Brisbane North – Nundah (QLD)

- Cairns (QLD)
 - Hobart (TAS)
 - Perth (WA)
 - Noarlunga (SA)
- c) New headspace centres will not be specifically created to only address the mental health needs of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. All headspace centres provide culturally secure services to Indigenous Australians as part of their core business.
- d) There is a phased funding and implementation approach to establishing the up to 30 new headspace sites. Up to ten sites will be established in year one (2010-11) with future sites to be determined on advice from headspace. The funding agreement requires that headspace make contracts with each of the new sites and that each new site will be operational and providing services to young people within six months of its contract with headspace being executed.
- e) Consistent with the funding agreement with headspace and its independent company status, headspace is responsible for determining the level of funding to each site.
- f) Please refer to answer d).
- g) It is estimated that 220,000 young Australians aged 16-24 years experience a mental health disorder in any year. This figure includes substance use disorders.

Many individuals do not seek help for a variety of reasons, or do not recognise that their distress and symptoms are due to mental illness. Additionally, lack of awareness that effective treatments are available and continuing stigma associated with mental illness are strong factors that act as barriers to people seeking treatment. The ABS 2007 Mental Health Survey shows that many people with mental illness report that they are not accessing treatment because they do not need it, do not believe treatment will help or are too concerned about stigma to present for treatment.

Notwithstanding these challenges and the need to intervene early, it is important to note that not everybody with mental illness requires clinical treatment and that up to 20 per cent of people with affective disorders (depression) will go into remission without treatment.

While headspace is a youth-specific program, young people can and do access a range of other mental health services including Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) and the Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and GPs through the Medicare Benefits Schedule (Better Access) initiative.

It is also evident that young people seek help in a range of ways and face-to-face support may not suit in all instances. Therefore, the Australian Government funds a range of telephone and web-based supports including Kids Helpline, the Inspire Foundation and MoodGym.

Part of the 2010 Budget measure *More Youth Friendly Mental Health Services* supports the development of a telephone and web-based service that aims to improve access for young people aged 12-25 years to experienced mental health counsellors.

Another recent initiative is a \$21.3 million investment under the \$274 million election commitment *Taking Action to Tackle Suicide* that will boost online mental health counselling services giving people who are reluctant or unable to access face-to-face mental health services an alternative avenue to seek help.

- h) The Department of Health and Ageing is unable to answer this question.