

CONNECT

Helplines Australia
Newsletter July 2011

Connect

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Australia





Optus pairs with Kids Helpline to combat cybersafety.

*Chloe Herrick
7 June 2011*

Under a new initiative, education packs for years three to twelve will be developed and distributed to over 10,000 primary and secondary schools nationally.

Optus has teamed up with Kids Helpline to combat cyber safety with a new initiative under which education packs will be developed and distributed to over 10,000 primary and secondary schools nationally.

The initiative, Make Cyberspace a Better Place, will oversee the distribution of the packs targeted at years three to six, seven to nine and ten to twelve, with each containing information on cyberbullying, "sexting" and the safe use of technology. Each pack will contain two lessons each for age group including video case studies, detailed lesson plans, screen savers and posters.

Alex Hawke the Deputy Chair of the Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety, launched the campaign today at Oakhill College in Castle Hill,

Sydney the first school nationally to adopt the new lesson plans.

"We must ensure that along with the enormous benefits available to young people through the online environment, there are also resources available about cyberbullying," Hawke said in a statement.

"Young people are often first to embrace new technologies and trends in the online environment and appropriate information that helps them to remain safe is welcome."

Kids Helpline general manager, Wendy Protheroe, said increased community concerns on the online safety of kids and younger people was the driving factor behind the project.

"Along with our partner Optus, we have developed lesson plans to help teachers educate students on how to make better, safer choices online and how to identify the signs of cyberbullying and to speak up if they experience it or witness it," she said in a statement.

According to Protheroe, while the digital age offers a wealth of information and connectedness, Australian students must learn to avoid the dangers of its misuse.

"Young people who are cyberbullied reported negative effects on their self-confidence, self-esteem, friendships, school grades and attendance,

and family relationships,” Protheroe said.

The organisation last year conducted almost 2400 counselling sessions where young people were worried about bullying or cyberbullying and harassment.

“While communications technology opens up a world of exciting possibilities, Optus is committed to preventing its misuse and ensuring young Australians stay cyber-safe,” Optus director of government and corporate affairs, Maha Krishnapillai, said.

“This cyber-safety education pack is just one way we can help ensure that young Australians connect and communicate responsibly.”

Federal Attorney-General Robert McClelland has flagged plans for Australia to develop its own Cyber White Paper which will cover areas including protection, cyber safety, cyber crime, cyber security and cyber defence.



SA Parent helpline disconnected afterhours

*Brett Williamson
31 May 2011*

Parents in need of help between 9:15pm and 7:15am are being greeted by a prerecorded message and redirected to Health Direct Australia as part of a state government service cutback. Health Minister John Hill told 891 Breakfast that only two to three calls per hour were received to the line during those hours and the cutbacks were a 'better use of resources.'

Father of six-month-old infant Jacob, Tom Meschede has established a 'We need a Parent Helpline' community page on facebook, with over 750 members protesting the reduction in the services.

Tom told 891 Breakfast that he had used the service between 10 to 12 times since his son was born and was very concerned about the change in services.

"They just basically give you some peace of mind through the night when you are at your wits end," Tom said.

With Jacob their first child, Tom said the line had been

a great comfort afterhours as they worked their way through the hurdles of parenthood.

Mr Meschede said he was first made aware of the cutbacks when he called the line at around 2:00am on a day last week and was redirected to Health Direct.

"I was on hold for about 25 minutes."

Calling on a mobile phone, Tom said he had to hang up before the call was answered.

Jacob was having a reaction to an immunisation injection and Tom ended up taking his child to the hospital.

Talking to 891 Breakfast, Health Minister John Hill explained that the changes to the service had been made to stop a double-up of afterhours health services offered by the government.

"The parent line, on average, two phone calls an hour overnight and the majority of those calls are medical in nature, so the Health Direct line is the place where that medical advice can be given to parents."

Mr Hill disputed claims that parents were being made to wait for up to 40 minutes for calls to be answered under the new system, stating 80 per cent of calls to the Health Direct service were answered within 20 seconds.

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"It's about using resources in a wise way rather than having duplication at a time when they are not being used very heavily."

Kerrie Bowering, director of the Child and Family Health Services SA told 891 Mornings that no budgetary cuts had been made.

"My budget hasn't been changed from the first of May," Ms Bowering said.

Ms Bowering confirmed Minister Hill's statement that the parental helpline was receiving 'very low' numbers of calls overnight, and most were of a medical nature.

She believed the changes offered benefits to parents who required urgent help overnight from the service.

Ms Bowering said she believed that technology was changing the way that people wanted to access information, with social media and online chat groups becoming more popular than phone based services for parental advice.

"We're all about providing a whole heap of contact points for parents, a whole lot of access points to meet their needs in different ways."



Medibank to run after-hours GP service

*Karen Dearne
2 June 2011*

Health Minister Nicola Roxon at a pharmacy in Canberra. Has announced the new service.

MEDIBANK Private has been tapped to provide the new after-hours GP web- and phone-based hotline from July 1.

Health Minister Nicola Roxon announced the deal today following weeks of negotiations with the government-owned insurer.

The value of the contract has not been revealed.

"One of Australia's most trusted health brands, Medibank Health Solutions, will operate the after-hours helpline with a team of about 100 GPs and more than 240 nurses on staff to answer calls," she said in a statement.

The software-based support service will operate in conjunction with the government's new Medicare Locals program, also due to start on July 1; patients calling local clinics after hours will be automatically redirected.

For Medibank, it is an expansion of the 24-hour nurse-on-call triage services it provides for the National Health Call Centre Network (trading as Health Direct), in a state government-supported bid to keep non-urgent cases out of hospital emergency departments.

Registered nurses working from their homes use a standard set of clinical decision-support algorithms to assess the best course of action for each caller and direct people to appropriate care.

Calls to the GP helpline will be answered by a nurse, who will transfer the call to a doctor if necessary.

Medibank managing director George Savvides said its "unique" care enhanced call centre platform would manage the triage process, and GPs would be provided with a suite of decision support tools to aid diagnosis and advice.

The insurer's health solutions division has begun recruiting doctors who will be on-call to answer questions from worried parents and others seeking medical advice between 6pm and 8am Monday to Friday, and in the afternoon and evenings on weekends.

Queensland won't join the service until early next year, and Victoria is yet to decide whether it should link its own nurse advice line to the national network.

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The Gillard government had allocated \$400 million to the Medicare Locals and GP after-hours programs last year.

Next year, the GP hotline will receive an additional \$50m in funding to expand services through video-conferenced consultations.

In the last quarter last year, Health Direct nurses answered around 186,500 calls; 84 per cent of these involved triage assistance.

www.healthdirect.org.au/pb. The helpline is available 24 hours a days, seven days a week by calling 1800 882 436.



E-support for mums

The Pregnancy, Birth & Baby Helpline team has launched a new online campaign that lets family and friends share their love with Camden's new mums and mums-to-be.

The Mum-e campaign provides a range of e-cards bearing messages of support for newly pregnant women, those approaching the baby's birth, and new mums in the early days of parenthood.



Say no to Elderly abuse

16 June 2011

The Anglican Church has urged the sector to stand up, be counted and start the conversation about making it mandatory for aged and community care staff to report the suspected abuse of an older person.

The Church's caring arm in Southern Queensland, Spiritus, used World Elder Abuse Awareness Day yesterday to call on families, the sector and government to reflect on disturbing trends of elderly abuse and to put in place preventative safeguards, such as effective personal monitoring of aged people.

"Some professionals in certain workplaces are required by law to report suspected abuse of children," said Director of Spiritus Community and Aged Care, Della Warren.

"It could be that as a society we should now seriously be looking to further protect our senior citizens by making it mandatory for care workers and others to report suspected abuse to the authorities.

"Certainly, at Spiritus we require our care workers to

do just that and we prepare them through the provision of professional standards, policies and processes to help guide our staff and ensure all incidents are properly investigated for the successful management of suspected abuse."

Ms Warren referred to statistics released by the Queensland government, which indicated that its Elder Abuse Prevention Unit's helpline took more than 1,500 crisis calls from concerned individuals over the last 12 months. This fact alone, she said, proves that elder abuse happens, and happens often.

"People living alone and in residential facilities can be vulnerable to all types of abuse and it is an important that there is a caring eye watching over and supporting them, which in the case of Spiritus is provided by our care workers."

Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) also received 768 calls about elder abuse from July to December 2010. This figure contributed to 75 per cent of the total number of calls received by the organisation during the period.

Of the calls taken, 29 per cent related to psychological /emotional abuse, 25 per cent were cases of financial abuse, six per cent were physical and four percent were the result of neglect.

Jenny Blakey, manager of SRV, said that elder abuse

as an unrecognised and under-reported occurrence that usually happens in the home away from public scrutiny.

“People are more aware of family violence and abuse, but don’t think about it occurring to older people,” Ms Blakey said.

A leading international gerontologist has also used the international awareness day to raise the issue of ageism and its relation to elder abuse.

Professor of Gerontology and Social Policy at the [University of Melbourne](http://www.unimelb.edu.au), Simon Biggs, said that the prevalence of ageism within the community increases the risk of older people experiencing elder abuse.

Also one of the authors of a UK study into the prevalence of elder abuse and mistreatment, Professor Briggs said that while reliable national data is not available in Australia, some Australian research suggests that 5 per cent of people presenting to aged-care and related services are subject to abuse.

Having a better understanding of the occurrence of elder abuse and its relationship to ageism within society can therefore derive more sustainable solutions to the problem.

“Ageism is as potent a form of discrimination as racism or sexism, and must be addressed through promotion of the rights of

older people,” Professor Briggs said.

To speak to someone at the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (QLD-based), call 1300 651 152.

To reach the Seniors Rights Victoria helpline, call 1300 368 821.



Dads Dealing with Divorce

When a couple separates, they may take their frustrations out in an arguments about who gets to keep the TV, but the reality is the depth of feelings can run much deeper. Emotions can be raw and if children are involved the situation can be even more heart-wrenching.

As part of Men's Health Week this week, the Australian Government's Child Support Agency is promoting it's partnership with the Men's telephone helpline, Mensline.

The Director of Parents Support Services with the Child Support Agency, Toni Brown told Dugald this morning that it's important for men to seek help during break-ups as men can be good at bottling their feelings. She says men

often report not sleeping or eating as well as they were and relate that some feel like they have failed as family men.

One of the hardest challenges for men is dealing with seeing their kids less. Toni says it can be especially hard to go from spending everyday time with children, to seeing them only once a fortnight.

Toni says there are more and more people needing extra help and support during a break up, whether it's to do with finances, children, re-arranging life, domestic violence or just needing someone to talk to.

If you'd like to know more, check out the Child Support Agency website or the Mensline website. www.csa.gov.au and www.menslineaus.org.au



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from 1 November.

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Australian Psychological Society

Annual Conference

4 to 6 October

Canberra Convention Centre

From Theory, Through Evidence to Practice

View details:
apsconference.com.au



Australia & New Zealand Mental Health Association

International Mental Health Conference

24 to 26 August

Gold Coast Queensland

Personality Disorder Out of the Darkness

View details:
<http://anzmh.asn.au/conference2011>



Australian Counselling Association

Annual Conference

12 to 14 November

Hilton on the park Melbourne

View website:
conferences.ozacom.com.au/2011/aca11/index.aspx



World Congress for Psychotherapy

24 to 28 August
Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre

World Dreaming

View Details
www.wcp2011.org/