

PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
MEDIA RELEASE

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6 May 2008

VICTORIA'S BABY BOOM BUDGET: GOOD NEWS FOR MUMS AND BUBS

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHA) has praised the maternal and child health package announced in today's Victorian State Budget.

"It's really positive to see new initiatives designed to prevent health problems in the next generation, as well as those designed to treat them. Traditionally measures to improve public health and prevent illness don't receive a lot of attention - a recent national study from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimated that public health activities received under 2% of recurrent expenditure for health as a whole," explained Michael Moore, CEO of the Public Health Association of Australia.

"As part of the maternal and child health package, \$42.7 million is provided over four years to ensure all babies and young children receive check-ups and health support at key developmental stages up to the age of five.

"\$12.2 million will provide enhanced maternal and child health services for babies and vulnerable families, particularly first-time mothers who need extra services and support. A further \$8.3 million has been allocated for antenatal care initiatives – programs on quitting smoking, promoting healthy eating and providing information on support services.

"Supporting mums and bubs makes sense because it enhances the health of the next generation," said Mr Moore.

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NT BUDGET FOCUS ON PREVENTION AND ‘CLOSING THE GAP’

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHA) today congratulated the Northern Territory State Government on its Budget and the inclusion of new funding for prevention health and initiatives designed to ‘close the gap’.

“It’s really positive to see a number of new initiatives designed to prevent health problems, as well as those designed to treat them. Traditionally measures to improve public health and prevent illness don’t receive a lot of attention - a recent national study from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimated that public health activities received under 2% of recurrent expenditure for health as a whole,” explained Michael Moore, CEO of the Public Health Association of Australia.

“Boosts to funding for a range of prevention and public health initiatives indicate that the Northern Territory Government is looking to the future health of Territorians, not just focussing on band-aids for current problems.

“Today’s Northern Territory Budget includes funding of over \$35 million for mental health services; \$54.5 million for public health services; and over \$124 million for community health services. Initiatives like this represent a long term investment in preventing health problems. The key is to help people to prevent or manage their illnesses before they become seriously ill and require hospitalisation.

“In addition, there are a number of new initiatives aimed at ‘closing the gap’ in health outcomes for Indigenous Territorians. \$6 million has been allocated over 5 years for the delivery of antenatal care and maternal health programs to mothers. A further half million has been allocated to support the alcohol and other drug withdrawal service in Darwin and Alice Springs.

“Initiatives designed to prevent health problems in communities make sense – the Public Health Association would like to congratulate the Northern Territory Government for the steps that it has taken via the Budget to prevent health problems for both Indigenous Territorians and the broader population,” said Mr Moore.

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ACT BUDGET: BUILDING CAPACITY IN HEALTH SERVICES

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHA) has congratulated the ACT Government for the significant investment in health infrastructure announced in today's budget.

“The ACT Government has announced \$300 million in expenditure on health infrastructure over the next four years. The bricks and mortar represented by this investment will provide a foundation for future health service delivery in the Territory,” said Michael Moore, Chief Executive Officer.

“Within that pool of funding is \$5.7 million to provide digital mammography equipment to improve breast cancer screening.

“An additional \$4.2 million is provided over four years (\$1 million in 2008-09) to build on existing ACT and national programs aimed at the prevention of chronic disease. This will enable the referral of people with, and at risk of, chronic disease to appropriate community-based prevention and support services – reducing the impact of chronic disease, enabling enhanced self-management and better outcomes in the longer term.

“Traditionally measures to improve public health and prevent illness don't receive a lot of attention - a recent national study from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare estimated that public health activities received under 2% of recurrent expenditure for health as a whole. It is positive to see that a number of prevention initiatives have been included as part of the Budget package.

“I am certain that the investment in infrastructure will provide a strong foundation on which to build future public health measures, including those focussed on preventing health problems,” said Mr Moore.

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