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Mental health & cancer prevention big winners in NSW Budget

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) has welcomed the additional investment in mental health services and cancer prevention in the NSW Budget. The increased focus on preventable illness and disease represents a sound investment in the future health of the NSW community.

“The NSW Government has delivered a budget of \$1.171 billion in 2009-10 to improve and expand vital mental health services. A further \$141 million will be spent on cancer research, prevention and treatment measures. A record \$14.5 billion has been provided for health services in this year’s budget, with the health budget representing over 26% of overall spending in NSW,” said Michael Moore, Chief Executive Officer of the PHAA.

“As part of mental health funding, an extra \$10 million will be spent on community-based mental health programs including services for older people, mental health emergency care, rehabilitation and state-wide telephone access. An additional \$3.8 million will go towards expanding the Aboriginal Housing and Support Accommodation Initiative (HASI) to support Aboriginal people living with a mental illness.

“The existing SAFESTART program will also be expanded to provide pre and post natal screening for depression for every mother in NSW. \$14.4 million will be spent over 4 years to improve support services for children of parents with a mental illness. These mental health initiatives collectively represent a strong investment in supporting those with a mental illness and their families to achieve better health outcomes over the longer term.

“\$31.5 million will be dedicated to cancer research, with an additional \$46.7 million for screening programs to better detect breast, bowel and cervical cancers. \$18.5 million will be spent on cancer prevention programs, including media campaigns to reduce smoking rates and increase awareness of melanoma.

“It is anticipated that the cancer prevention programs will help to prevent up to 30% of cancers caused by lifestyle factors.

“Enhanced spending on cancer research and prevention and mental health support services will not only reduce the number of people requiring acute care over the longer term but also contribute to the enhanced health and wellbeing of the NSW community as a whole. The NSW Government should be congratulated for its efforts in these key areas,” said Mr Moore.

For further information/comment:

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