



Quarterly Report: HealthDirect

April - June 2007

Introduction

HealthDirect was established in 1999 to provide telephone advice to the community on the urgency of an individual's need for health care. HealthDirect is one of the programs run by the WA Health Call Centre which, from July, will become part of the National Health Call Centre Network (NHCCN). Once established, the NHCCN will provide health advice for all Australians through a single telephone number. WA is fortunate that the HealthDirect name has been chosen for the Australia-wide service.

Over the preceding 3 months the Health Call Centre has worked with the Department of Health and the NHCCN Company to make arrangements for the transition across to the National Network. Services to the community will not be disrupted during the transition period.

Activity

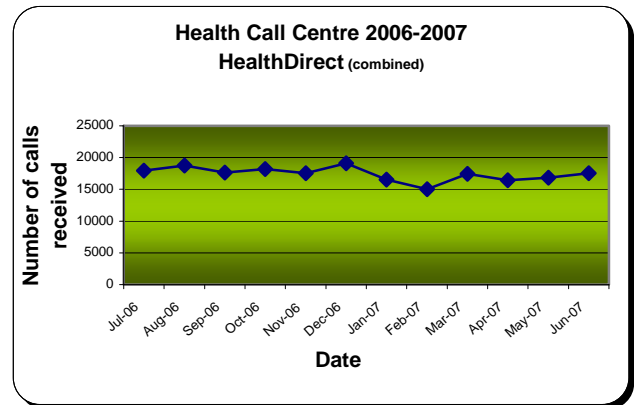
The number of calls received by HealthDirect since July 2006 is provided in Table 1. As per the previous quarterly report, the call volume appears to have plateaued. Regular media advertising has been withheld until the National Health Call Centre Network releases the new National HealthDirect telephone number. Once the number has been publicly announced, a new round of advertising should see activity gradually increase again.

Top 10 Presenting Problems

The top 10 presenting problems over the last 3 months is presented in decreasing order. The high number of telephone calls relating to children is noteworthy.

- Vomiting (child)
- Medication Question Calls
- Colds (child)
- Fever (child)
- Chest pain/Discomfort <8 hours
- Diarrhoea (child)
- Abdominal Pain/Discomfort
- Trauma-Head (child)
- Cough (child)
- Rashes, Widespread (child)

Table 1 - Calls offered for combined triage and information services



Satisfaction with the service

The HealthDirect program recorded 136 compliments (directly from customers) and only 33 complaints, which included internal complaints where a staff member thought their own organisation could have done better. The high number of compliments is one indicator of the success of the HealthDirect program in meeting customer needs.

No serious adverse events were reported.

The results of a satisfaction survey carried out earlier in 2007 are being currently analysed. Preliminary findings again reveal a high level of community satisfaction with the HealthDirect service. The complete set of results will be available in the July-October 2007 quarterly report.

Health Call Centre Services

The Health Call Centre carries out a range of telephone services to support the community. The following reports outline the activities in some of these programs. The others, for example Disease Management Phone Coaching, are reported elsewhere by the project managers.

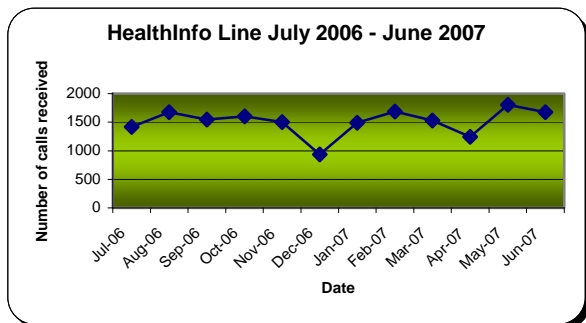


Health Information Line

The Health Information Line receives an average of 1500 calls per month. Individuals in the community call for information on the range and location of health services available to them and for printed material on health issues.

As per Table 2, the number of calls to the Health Information Line decreased over the Christmas holiday period. The number of calls this quarter has declined slightly following a very active previous quarter.

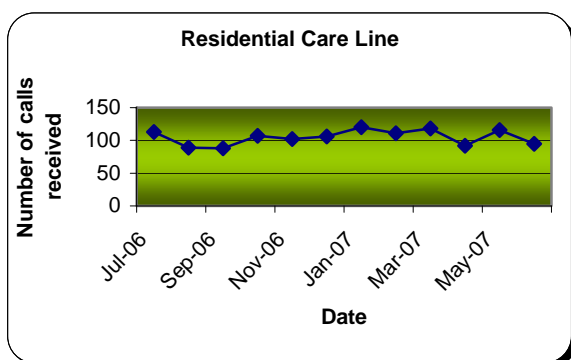
Table 2 - Calls to the Health Information Line



The Residential Care Line

The Residential Care Line receives approximately 100 calls per month from nursing homes to Health Call Centre nurses with special training in caring for people in residential settings. The service generally saves one third of calls attending hospital emergency departments. Although the numbers of calls handled is small, as per Table 3, about 30 ED presentations were saved in the previous three months through this program.

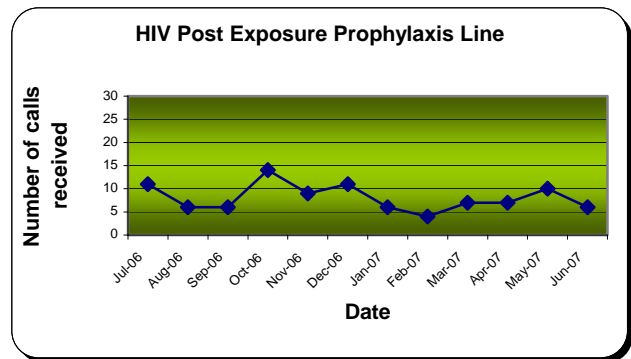
Table 3 - Calls to the Residential Care Line



Post Exposure Prophylaxis Line

People seeking advice about how to handle possible exposure to HIV use this line. Calls to the number remained relatively constant.

Table 4 - Calls to the Postexposure Prophylaxis Line



Secondary Triage

The Health Call Centre provides secondary triage for people who have called an ambulance on the 000 number, but do not have a life-threatening health condition. Rather than travelling by ambulance to a hospital these people are offered advice on the urgency of their need for health care. On average, approximately 90% of these people are assisted without requiring an ambulance, leaving only 10% of callers requiring ambulance transport to hospital. Over the last three months approximately 114 emergency department presentations were saved. The DoH is working with the St John Ambulance to increase these referrals and further reduce unnecessary ED presentations.

Table 5 - Calls for Secondary Triage

