



Media release

Friday 23rd February 2018

AMA Tasmania calls on Government to establish an Integrated Primary Care Telephone Triage and Medical Advice Service for all Tasmanians URGENTLY

The AMA supports the development of a highly integrated state-wide 24 hour registered nurse and doctor (GP) telephone triage and medical advice service. The value of registered nurse telephone triage and GP medical advice is already proven, particularly during the after-hours period.

The Tasmanian government already invests either directly or indirectly in a number of health call centres which are available to the Tasmanian public. These include Health Direct Australia, GP Assist and Mental Health Lines. These services are mainly stand alone with little or no meaningful integration.

Further to this, Ambulance Tasmania has recently commenced investigating the establishment of yet another health advice line for Tasmanian callers to the ambulance service not requiring an ambulance.

If the government committed to establishing a single integrated primary care health call centre in the state, the cost would be modest, the cost savings significant, the support for health workers notably GPs in regional and rural areas would be enhanced and most importantly there would be a substantial improvement in health care outcomes for all Tasmanians.

This investment would benefit all Tasmanians particularly those in regional and rural communities. It would reduce inappropriate emergency department attendances and provide support to registered nurses working in community hospitals, residential aged care facilities, the Community Rapid Response Services and those providing palliative care. There would be integration with Ambulance Tasmania and a substantial improvement in mental health support.

The proposed primary care telephone triage service would build on the best elements of the current service providers while improving health outcomes at lower cost than the current government-funded solutions. It will deliver the right care to the right patient at the right time and the right place.

To not commit to exploring integration of existing call centre services before moving to establish yet another separate service and costly service at Ambulance Tasmania would be unthinkable and to the detriment of good health care delivery.

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