

Access to Allied Psychological Services Projects

National Perinatal Depression Initiative

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The National Perinatal Depression Initiative, as announced in the 2008-09 Federal Budget, aims to improve prevention and early detection of antenatal and postnatal depression, and to provide better care, support and treatment for expectant and new mothers experiencing depression.

The initiative will provide:

- finalisation of national guidelines for screening for perinatal depression;
- routine screening for perinatal depression (once during pregnancy and a follow up check around two months after birth);
- workforce training and development for health professionals;
- follow up support and care for women assessed as at risk of or experiencing perinatal depression; and
- research and data collection.

The Australian Government contribution of \$55 million over five years includes:

- an additional \$20 million to the Access to Allied Psychological Services component of the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care Program to support better treatment for women with perinatal depression;
- \$30 million to State and Territory Governments to partially cover the roll out of universal screening, support services, and training for health professionals; and
- \$5 million to *beyondblue* to support implementation of the initiative.

An additional \$30 million commitment over five years will be sought from the State and Territory Governments to supplement the roll out of universal screening, support services, and training for health professionals.

Arrangements for implementing the ATAPS component

The additional \$20 million in funding over five years to the ATAPS program will be based on the following principles:

- A proportion of funding for Divisions of General Practice in the first year (2008-09) will be made available to forge key links and referral pathways with child and maternal health services.
- This funding will also enable Divisions of General Practice to promote the use of other pathways to care such as the Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners program and/or other Medicare items such as Non-directive Pregnancy Support Counselling.

- There will be a strong focus on access to support services in rural and remote areas, and for communities with special needs (eg Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities).
- The balance of ATAPS funding in the first and subsequent years will be directed to allied health service delivery including but not limited to women with perinatal depression.

beyondblue's role in supporting the implementation of the National Perinatal Depression Initiative will include developing materials to support professional practice, such as guidelines and training materials. Discussions will be held with AGPN in the near future around how these materials could be promoted and disseminated by Divisions of General Practice in the first year.

It is expected that a funding formula for disseminating the ATAPS funds under the National Perinatal Depression Initiative will be finalised in September 2008 and that funding agreements with each Division will be in place before the end of 2008.

end

Community Services Section
Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Programs Branch
Mental Health and Workforce Division