



23 May 2000

ACT Budget 2000
Health Portfolio 03

Building Social Capital in the Health sector

The Minister for Health and Community Care, Michael Moore, today announced the health portfolio's contributions to the ACT Government's package of Building Social Capital initiatives.

The Building Social Capital program, a key initiative in the ACT 2000-2001 Budget, is about building partnerships between Government, the community and business sectors, which will improve the quality of life for families and individuals. The concept of social capital is the centrepiece of the Government's message to the community, and demonstrates that the benefits of a balanced budget will be directed towards those most in need of help.

The ACT Government is allocating \$3.740 million through the health portfolio over four years to help individuals and families, the Minister said.

"Seven new initiatives will occur within the health portfolio, targeting disadvantaged people to ensure that we build up a healthy community," he said.

"Living in today's society is extremely exciting and fulfilling, but it can also be very challenging and stressful.

"The Building Social Capital program aims to provide early and timely advice and support to help make life in our city healthier and more rewarding.

"The Government is committed to partnerships with the community and business sectors which support the development and resilience of Canberra families and individuals.

"To help build a healthy community, we are focussing on initiatives to support members of our community at all stages from pre-birth to adulthood," Mr Moore said.

Details of each initiative are listed below.

Well babies program

The Government will provide \$360,000 over four years to promote the health and wellbeing of babies from the time of conception. The program will target folate deficiency, alcohol abstinence and smoking cessation with an emphasis on education and support services.

The future of any society is dependent on the health, wellbeing and education of its children. The ACT's population will age over the next 30 years to the extent that we must now ensure that our fertility rate is maintained and that we maximise the health and education of the children born in the ACT. By investing in the newborn we are investing in the economic and social capital of the ACT's future.

Healthy Families

Drug and alcohol issues

Problematic drug and alcohol use can result in emotional and physical neglect and abuse in childhood which inhibits the development of emotional resilience and greatly increases children's vulnerability to mental and other health and social problems both in childhood and later in life.

The program will provide early prevention and support services for children and families where problematic alcohol and other drug use occurs. The program will also focus on specific partnerships designed to support parents and address early behavioural problems in children in families where neglect and abuse has already occurred.

An additional \$200,000 a year will be allocated to assist families experiencing problems with the use of alcohol or other drugs. In particular, the program will provide counselling and support for children and parents in a residential rehabilitation setting.

Child health and family well being

Canberra mothers and babies will benefit from the allocation of \$500,000 over four years for the home and community based early prevention program involving more comprehensive visits to mothers and babies with complex or special needs.

The program aims to redress the health inequalities of more vulnerable families with newborns by providing supportive, professional home visiting services.

Depression

National Initiative

Support will be provided to the Australian Depression Initiative to advance understanding and treatment of depression through scientific research and community education and awareness. The initiative will cost \$70,000 a year.

This will be a collaborative effort between the Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments, business and the community, to improve research into and treatment for depression, and help to reduce the stigma attached to the illness through community education.

Support for Women and their families

The post natal depression program will receive an additional \$280,000 over four years to deliver extra support, information and counselling services to women and their families.

Child and Youth Nutrition

Pilot programs will be conducted in schools to promote healthy nutrition amongst indigenous and at risk children and youth. The aim is to improve the health status of the children by promoting the benefits of a healthy breakfast through a number of activities. This initiative will cost \$70,000 a year.

Indigenous Youth Health

Funding of \$120,000 per annum will be provided to establish a broader holistic approach for young Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders who are experiencing multiple and complex health problems. The program aims to improve access of indigenous people to mainstream services, enhancing the sensitivity of mainstream services to cross cultural issues and improving linkages between indigenous and mainstream services.

Youth Suicide - Vision for Youth through Knowledge and Education (VYNE)

Funding will be provided to continue the VYNE program, which provides professional education and training in youth suicide risk assessment and crisis intervention. In addition to training and education, the program will establish a 24-hour youth suicide prevention resource centre. This initiative will cost \$120,000 a year.

Youth at risk - Youth counsellor program at The Junction Youth Health Service

A youth counsellor will be employed at The Junction to help identify and treat depression and other mental health problems in young people and to build linkages with other service providers. This initiative will cost \$70,000 a year.

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