

Health call centres in Australia – issues for divisions

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GPDV is a QIC accredited organisation

The story so far

- Policy development in AHPMC since '99
- Call centres overseas (NHS Direct)
- Health call centres in WA, ACT, NT, Qld
- Nurse-on-Call in Victoria
- National call centre agreed at COAG '06

What are they for?

- More appropriate use of services?
- New service for
 - improved access?
 - better information?
 - self-management?
- Meet after hours demands?
- Access for rural populations?

What does the evidence show?

- Safe
- Reduces after hours demand for GPs
- May reduce overall demand for GPs
- Little impact on EDs and other service use
- Reduces demand for hospital phone advice
- Highly valued by public
- Addresses some access barriers
- May result in some unnecessary contacts

Why an issue for divisions?

- Patients
 - Continuity and quality of care
 - Consistent advice about
 - how, when and where to access services
 - health and self-management
- GPs
 - Effect on existing services, esp after-hours
 - GP shortage and workload
 - Trust in the call centre service

Implementation Issues

- Calling Nurse-on-Call
 - 1800 number or through practices?
- After-hours referral to existing services
 - practices? division-run after-hours services?
 - deputising services?
 - RDNS? Ambulance?
- Communication back to regular GP?
- Public health crises & pandemics?

Evaluation

- Clarity about
 - aim and purpose
 - expected benefits
- Baseline data for analysis of impact
 - Access to services & information
 - GP workload
 - Integration of services

Questions for today

- What are call centres for?
- What are the issues for divisions?
- How will divisions and GPDV influence the implementation of Nurse-on-Call?