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Program of Resources, Information and Support for Mothers



State and Commonwealth maternal health policy and program context during PRISM, 1999-2002

Natasha Davidson and Rhonda Small

Policy and program 'mapping'

Policy areas

- Maternal and child health (State)
- Maternity services (State)
- Mental Health (State & Comm)
- Women's Health (State & Comm)

Program areas

- Human Services - various div's (State)
- Dept of Premier and Cabinet (State)
- Health and Aged Care (Comm)
- Family and Community Services (Comm)
- Office of the Status of Women (Comm)

Maternal (and child) health: State (1)

MCH Service :

- Enhanced Home Visiting Service from 2001: vulnerable families, incl women with depression
- Developed from 31 "New Initiatives" projects (targeted outreach/ home visiting) to vulnerable families) 1997-1999
- Four Pilot Outreach Projects targeting vulnerable families 1996-1997
- After Hours Telephone Service (became 24hrs Nov 2000)
- MCH Quality improvement projects: one only focused on maternal health

Maternal (and child) health: State (2)

Early Parenting Services (three statewide services)

- Some focus on maternal emotional health issues in context of early settling/sleeping programs

Other MCH activity:

- Standards for Professional Practice 1999: 'Standard 3: The MCH nurse promotes maternal health and wellbeing'
- Day-stay/early parenting programs in many LGAs
- Triple P parenting programs: MCH nurses taking up training from 1999? and offering courses to parents
- Parents Tips Sheets: one on feeling depressed issued in 2000; none on maternal physical health

Maternal (and child) health: State (3)

Summary:

- Principal focus in years 1999-2002
 - Targeting of services to vulnerable families, incl women with depression
 - Early parenting skills
- Focus on maternal health issues played relatively minor role in policy and program directions for MCH service
- Maternal health performance measures/initiatives (see attached handout:1999-2001)

'The early years': State & C'wealth

"Best Start" 2001 - (State)

- Strategy focusing on ameliorating disadvantage with main focus on improving outcomes for children
- Aims to improve parent confidence/ self esteem and reduce distress
- Maternal health in relation to impact on child's health
- Demonstration projects from 2002?

Family & Community Services (C'wealth)

- Good Beginnings
- Stronger Families, Stronger Communities
- Parent Information Centres (Parentzone..)

Maternity services: State

- # Maternity Services Program 1998-2002
 - More individualised care; greater continuity of maternity care
 - Focus on women with special needs
 - Increase in numbers of women receiving domiciliary visits post birth
- # Some potential for more focus on maternal health and recovery in funded programs

Primary Care Partnerships: State

- # From 2000-2001:
 - Attempt to streamline primary care service provision and promote inter-agency collaboration - avoid duplication of services
 - Coordinating body through which funding arrangements made with member agencies in each area
 - Aims to provide uniform approaches to service planning across LGAs
 - Potential for PCPs to put up programs around maternal health ... none so far?

Maternal mental health: State

- # Focus on the seriously mentally ill
- # Focus on reducing barriers to accessing services
- # Some acknowledgment of the social aspects of mental illness; shifts to community-based care
- # Postnatal mental illness: Mother-Baby acute psychiatric units (3 public - metro, growing no's of private- metro - units)
- # Little focus on primary care response to maternal depression

Maternal mental health: C/wealth

- # Mental health policy framework set in the mid 1990s by:
 - First National Mental Health Strategy/Plan
 - Second National Mental health Plan
- # Both have made mention of postnatal depression
- # Little action flowed from these policies in relation to maternal mental health, until late 2001 *beyondblue's* National Postnatal Depression Initiative...still to get underway

Women's health: State & C/wealth

- # Policy framework for women's health:
 - National women's health policy dating from 1989: little focus on maternal health in specific policies/programs throughout the 1990s
 - Victorian Women's Health and Wellbeing Strategy Discussion Paper 2001, final strategy released September 2002
 - Maternal health: ??
- # Program developments with maternal health focus??

In summary..

- # Little evidence for a major policy or program focus on maternal health issues in the period 1999-2002 at either State or Commonwealth levels
- # Exception: some targeted services for women identified as being depressed (EHV program from 2001-)