



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health

Andrew Wallace MP
Federal Member for Fisher

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$3.2 million to improve care for people with eating disorders

The Turnbull Government is investing \$3.2 million in a new pilot project to improve the treatment and care of people with eating disorders.

The Government will provide eating disorder advocacy organisation, the Butterfly Foundation, \$1.4 million to run a pilot project on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

The national pilot will support over 240 patients, trialling new ways to support people with eating disorders, which will ultimately inform future support for patients around Australia.

The Butterfly Foundation will first engage with local doctors on the Sunshine Coast, undertaking a six month education and awareness program on eating disorders.

Two treatments will then be offered to patients, including up to 20 psychotherapy sessions for less complex eating disorders and up to 50 psychotherapy sessions for people with anorexia nervosa or other complex eating disorders.

The Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast Primary Health Network will also receive \$1.8 million over three years to commission services and engage with health professionals in support of the pilot project.

A comprehensive evaluation will be undertaken following the end of the pilot, which will inform support for patients with eating disorders.

Minister for Health Greg Hunt said the project will involve local health professionals being trained to provide eating disorder-specific treatment.

“Local general practitioners will be trained to identify, assess and treat eating disorders,” Minister Hunt said.

“The project will also include the development of networks between trained health professionals to create integrated treatment services.”

Member for Fisher Andrew Wallace said it was fantastic that the Sunshine Coast had been chosen as the location of the project.

“I have advocated strongly for a treatment program here on the Sunshine Coast which would comprehensively address the multi-faceted needs of people with an eating disorder.

Anorexia is by far the deadliest mental health condition in Australia. It can have a devastating impact, not only on sufferers’ physical and mental health, but also on the people around them,” Mr Wallace said.

“Thousands of families in Australia are affected by eating disorders each year and too many sufferers face the difficult battle without the unique multi-disciplinary treatment they need.

We must change this deadly situation, and reach more of the 75 per cent of sufferers who are never diagnosed.”

“I am delighted that 240 people on the Sunshine Coast are going to get the treatment they need through this pilot project, and I look forward to seeing how the results can help thousands more throughout the country.”

Minister Hunt said more needed to be done more to support and offer appropriate treatment to people with an eating disorder.

“Last year I requested the Medical Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review Taskforce investigate options for Medicare coverage for the treatment needs of those people with an eating disorder,” Minister Hunt said.

“The taskforce is currently in the process of establishing the Eating Disorders Working Group. The Eating Disorders Working Group will provide advice on whether existing MBS items identified are appropriate for the treatment of eating disorders and options to better align the MBS with national standards for safe integrated treatment of eating disorders.”

Since 2013, the Government has invested more than \$11 million in eating disorder treatment and support.

(ENDS)

Authorised by Greg Hunt MP, Liberal Party of Australia, Hastings, Victoria.