



## **THE HON CHRISTOPHER PYNE MP**

### **Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing**

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#### **Youth Mental Health Foundation to be established**

A new Youth Mental Health Foundation to better assist young Australians who suffer from mental illness is to be established by the Australian Government.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, Christopher Pyne, said the foundation would provide a national, coordinated focus on youth mental health and related drug and alcohol problems in Australia.

The foundation will be funded under the \$69 million 2005–2006 Promoting Better Mental Health Budget initiative.

“One in four young Australians suffer from mental illness in any one year and three-quarters of all mental health problems begin before the age of 25,” Mr Pyne said.

“When left untreated, mental health problems like depression and anxiety may lead to alcohol and substance abuse, and up to half of young people with these problems directly attribute them to untreated or poorly treated mental health concerns.”

The new foundation would provide a centre of excellence to promote evidence-based practice in youth mental health and related drug and alcohol problems and will foster community awareness of youth mental health issues and promote young people’s help-seeking behaviour.

It would also administer a local grants program to help coordinate services for young people with mental health problems and develop and disseminate evidence-based education and training resources for GPs and other service providers working with young people.

“The Youth Mental Health Foundation will improve access for young people with mental health and drug and alcohol problems to appropriate services and ensure better coordination between services,” Mr Pyne said.

The Department of Health and Ageing will call for expressions of interest from organisations or consortia to establish and operate the new foundation in the coming weeks.

This initiative reflects the Australian Government’s commitment to improving the mental health of young people.

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