

13 November 2011

New service to help Queensland mums at risk of depression

Brisbane 13 November 2011; - Women's Health Queensland Wide Inc (Women's Health) has marked the start of Postnatal Depression Awareness Week by launching a callback service providing support for expectant and new mothers in Queensland.

The service offers all pregnant women and new mothers who contact the Health Information Line with the option of receiving a follow up call from a qualified nurse, regardless of the reason for their initial call.

Manager Kathy Faulkner said that high uptake of the service to date demonstrates the increased need for support many women have at this time of their lives,

"Most women who call us to ask a health question accept our offer of a follow up call. While we can't control all the things that put women at risk of developing antenatal and postnatal depression we can provide information and referral to help women develop the skills they need to manage all aspects of their lives when a baby arrives," she said.

"Our large migratory population means that many women in Queensland are away from their extended families when they give birth. In addition, the trend towards having less children and having them later in life means that for some women the first time they hold a baby, it is theirs."

But while awareness campaigns have led to an increased knowledge of depression linked to pregnancy, services for those diagnosed remain lacking across the state,

"In Brisbane available services are dismal, particularly if you do not have private health insurance. And outside Brisbane, services are dire," Faulkner said.

"While we welcome the rollout of a national screening and care program we need to make sure local community and health services across the state have the ability to support women who might be at risk."

Depression affects approximately 10 per cent of pregnant women and 16 per cent of women who have given birth.

Women's Health is a not for profit health promotion, information and education service for women and health professionals throughout Queensland.

Queensland women can ask a health question by calling 3839 9988 or 1800 017 676 (toll free outside Brisbane). Health Information is also available via www.womhealth.org.au.

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