

NURSE-ON-CALL



Foreword from the Minister for Health

On the 4 June 2006 the State government's commitment to establish a State-wide health call centre became a reality. For the first time ever, all Victorians have access to the same high quality health advice and information no matter where they live, any time of the day or night. This is a significant initiative putting Victoria at the forefront of quality health care delivery.

One year on there is strong evidence that NURSE-ON-CALL continues to be valued by the Victorian community. Since 4 June 2006 when the service was launched, NURSE-ON-CALL has answered over 418,000 calls reflecting that Victorians are embracing this service. Since March 2006 over 45,000 calls have been diverted from hospital emergency departments to NURSE-ON-CALL allowing doctors and nurses to spend more time treating patients in life-threatening situations.

NURSE-ON-CALL is about providing high quality, reliable immediate professional advice. Never before has quality health advice and information been so accessible and affordable.

I'm proud to introduce the NURSE-ON-CALL Annual Newsletter and look forward to providing updates on how NURSE-ON-CALL continues to offer benefits to Victorians and the health system.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Andrews."

Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Minister for Health

NURSE-ON-CALL ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

1 JULY 2006–30 JUNE 2007 – SERVICE REPORT

NURSE-ON-CALL HAS ITS 1ST BIRTHDAY



Nine year old Caleb Edge had been sick for two days with gastro like symptoms when his worried mum Rachel rang NURSE-ON-CALL for a second opinion.

NURSE-ON-CALL advised Rachel to take Caleb straight to hospital where they discovered he had a gangrenous perforated appendix.

Rachel said if she hadn't rung NURSE-ON-CALL they would have probably stayed at home and Caleb may not have been here today.

On 3 June 2007 NURSE-ON-CALL celebrated its first birthday with the former Minister for Health, Hon Bronwyn Pike. Over 418,000 calls have been answered by NURSE-ON-CALL since the service was launched on 4 June last year, reflecting that Victorians are clearly comfortable using the telephone based health service.

Since March 2006 hospitals commenced transferring callers who were seeking health information and/or advice from NURSE-ON-CALL. Minister Pike said *45,000 calls that used to go to Emergency Departments have now been diverted to NURSE-ON-CALL and this has meant a considerable saving in time.*

Many compliments from satisfied callers have been received reflecting that Victorians value a service that can provide expert health advice and information on the spot. Rachel Edge is one caller who is very happy she called NURSE-ON-CALL about her son, Caleb.

A Victorian
Government
initiative



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Preliminary results of a customer satisfaction survey undertaken in February 2007 showed:

- 98.4% respondents indicated they were satisfied with the service provided.
- 95% respondents felt that they were carefully listened too.
- 98.1% respondents felt NURSE-ON-CALL was a valuable first step in managing their health issue.
- 95.1% of respondents felt that they were likely to use the service again.

How have Victorians responded to NURSE-ON-CALL?

- Between 1 July 2006 and 30 June 2007 NURSE-ON-CALL answered over 397,000 calls.
- Weekends remain the busiest times, with most calls received on a Sunday evening.

Who calls NURSE-ON-CALL?

- 90.2% of calls received in 06/07 were directly from the public and 9.8% were transferred from hospitals.

- Since January an average of 2,900 calls per month to NURSE-ON-CALL were made from a mobile phone.
- Women made up 76.0% of callers, but only 59.7% of patients.
- 76.8%* of calls received were from metropolitan Victoria, 22.5% were from regional Victoria and 0.6% from interstate. Calls from interstate residents are only received when transferred by hospitals located on state borders.

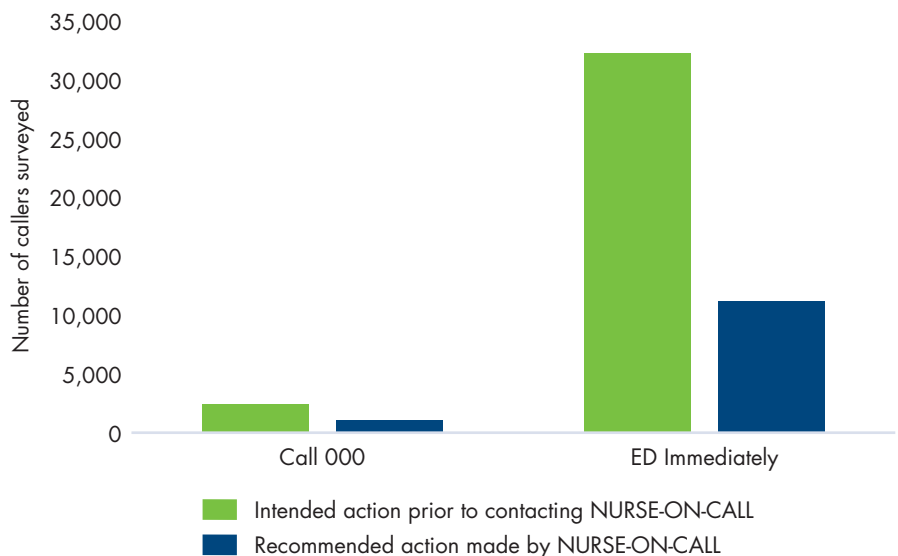
* Approximately 80% of calls answered had a recorded postcode. Some calls such as urgent 000 transfers, anonymous calls and quick calls will not have a postcode recorded.

What did Callers intend to do and what were they advised by NURSE-ON-CALL?

Approximately 70% of callers are asked what they would have done if they had not rung NURSE-ON-CALL. In some cases the action that callers intended to take was different to the action NURSE-ON-CALL advised them to take. See graph for examples.

Each month there are also a small proportion of callers who do not realise the severity of their illness and intend to stay at home and care for themselves. For example, of the 38,322 callers who said that they would have stayed at home, 993 of them needed urgent medical care and/or an ambulance transfer. Rachel Edge's call about her nine year old son Caleb, was a good example of such a call.

Potential decrease in the number of inappropriate actions
1 July 2006–30 June 2007

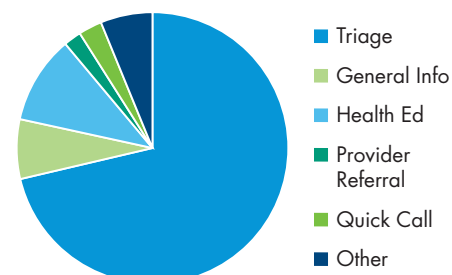


NB: It should be noted that whilst NURSE-ON-CALL may recommended a certain action the caller may not necessarily heed the advice given.

What happened when people called NURSE-ON-CALL?

- On average, each caller spoke to a registered nurse for 8.38 minutes.
- Triage accounted for the majority of calls – a full summary of the call outcome is shown below.

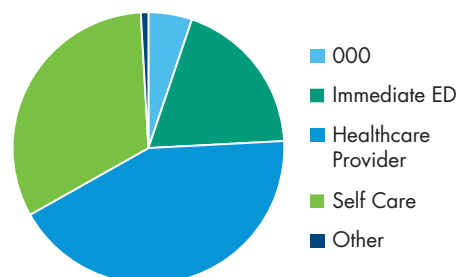
Summary by Outcome – % of total calls	Number	Percentage
Triage	279,225	71.44%
General Information Provided	27,605	7.06%
Health Education	40,995	10.49%
Provider Referral	8,116	2.08%
Quick Call (Includes wrong numbers, prank, hoax calls)	10,765	2.75%
Other (not recorded, admin file, transferred internally, etc)	24,173	6.18%



NB – A single call to NURSE-ON-CALL may be seeking advice about both symptoms and health information.

What were the final dispositions* of calls to NURSE-ON-CALL?

Summary of Final Disposition	Number	Percentage
Transfer to 000	14,724	5.18%
Attend Emergency Department Immediately	53,941	18.99%
See Healthcare Provider	121,199	42.67%
Self Care	91,694	32.28%
Other (includes Poisons, Police, etc)	2,459	0.87%
Total	284,017	99.99%



* Disposition refers to the recommendation made by NURSE-ON-CALL.

What advice did callers seek?

The most frequently requested Health Education topics were: Chicken Pox (11.21%), Fever in children (4.60%), Shingles (4.40%) and Contraception – the morning after pill (2.08%).

Summary of Top 10 Triage Guidelines Used	
1. Vomiting (Paediatric) (5.25%)	6. Chest pain/discomfort (2.49%)
2. Fever (Paediatric) (4.36%)	7. Diarrhoea/Change in Bowel Habits (1.97%)
3. Abdominal Pain/Discomfort (3.79%)	8. Rashes, Widespread, Cause Unknown (Paediatric) (1.88%)
4. Diarrhoea (Paediatric) (2.70%)	9. Headache (1.7%)
5. Nausea/vomiting (2.67%)	10. Trauma (1.7%)

Data from health call advice lines in other states indicates that the most frequently used guidelines and top topics for health information vary each season.