

NURSE-ON-CALL

Quarterly Newsletter

1 January–31 March 2007

Service Report

NURSE-ON-CALL has now been operational for over 10 months. Over 330,000 calls have been answered in this time and anecdotal reports suggest that callers generally remain very satisfied with the service.

How have Victorians responded to NURSE-ON-CALL?

- NURSE-ON-CALL answered over 94,400 calls between January and March 2007.
- Weekends remain the busiest times, with most calls received on a Sunday evening. Calls received on the weekend account for 31.2% of total calls received by the service between January and March 2007.
- It is expected that 80% of calls made to the service will be answered in 20 seconds or less. As the service has become more established response levels have improved and it is pleasing to see that for the last two months, response times have been in excess of this requirement.

Who calls NURSE-ON-CALL?

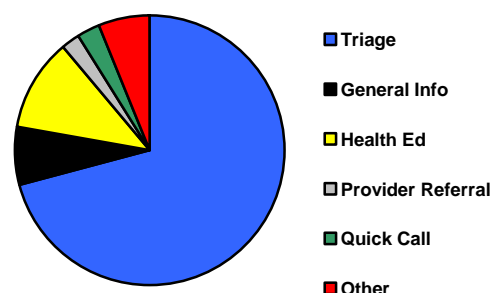
- 91.5% of calls received were directly from the public and 8.5% were transferred from hospitals.
- Women made up 75.65% of callers.
- Males made up 39.06% of patients.
- The largest group of female patients were aged between 20-44 years (41.27%).
- The largest group of male patients were aged between 0-14 years (53.91%).
- In January – March, 75.41%* of calls received were from metropolitan Victoria and 23.72% were from regional Victoria. These figures are fairly consistent with the previous quarter, which were 77% of calls from metropolitan Victoria and 23% from rural Victoria.

**Approximately 78% of calls answered had a recorded postcode. Some calls such as very urgent 000 transfers, anonymous calls and quick calls will not have a postcode recorded.*

What happened when people called NURSE-ON-CALL?

- On average, each caller spoke to a registered nurse for 8.26 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	65,663	70.95%
General Information Provided	6,180	6.68%
Health Education	10,485	11.33%
Provider Referral	2,006	2.16%
Quick Call		
(Includes wrong numbers, prank, hoax calls)	2,587	2.79%
Other		
(not recorded, admin file, transferred internally, etc)	5,617	6.07%



**A single call made to NURSE-ON-CALL can result in two or more call outcomes. For example, a caller might be provided with general information and a referral to a service.*

What advice did callers seek?

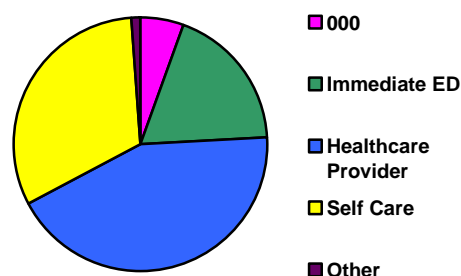
- The most frequently requested Health Education topics were: Chicken Pox (11.50%), Shingles (5.86%), Fever in children (3.15%) and Contraception – the morning after pill (2.25%).

Summary of Top 10 Triage Guidelines Used	
1. Fever (Paediatric) (4.17%)	6. Nausea/vomiting (2.48%)
2. Abdominal pain/discomfort (3.94%)	7. Diarrhoea (Paediatric) (1.94%)
3. Vomiting (Paediatric) (3.14%)	8 Rashes, Widespread, Cause Unknown (Paediatric) (1.92%)
4. Bites and Stings – Insects/Spiders (2.57%)	9. Headache (1.9%)
5. Chest pain/discomfort (2.55%)	10. Diarrhoea / Change in Bowel Habits (1.89%)

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.

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

Summary of Final Disposition	Number	Percentage
Transfer to 000	3,786	5.67%
Attend Emergency Department Immediately	12,270	18.37%
See Healthcare Provider	28,881	43.25%
Self Care	21,146	31.66%
Other (includes Poisons, Police, etc)	688	1.03%
Total	66,771	99.98%



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

Each month there are a small proportion of callers who had not realised the severity of their illness and intended to care for themselves. Of the callers surveyed in January-March 2007, 394 cases of people who intended to care for themselves were identified by the service as having a condition that required urgent immediate care and an ambulance transfer.

NURSE-ON-CALL – A NURSE’S PERSPECTIVE

Robyn McGarvie has been nursing for 27 years and has been working on NURSE-ON-CALL since its inception.

What do you think about working for NURSE-ON-CALL?

I find it very challenging, very interesting, at times quite demanding, but overall extremely satisfying.

How is it different for other types of nursing?

It is very different to working in a hospital. A phone based triage nurse needs to have stamina in listening and concentrating on the caller rather than physical stamina.

What are the most common calls?

Definitely the most common calls we get are from worried parents with children who are vomiting or have diarrhoea.

What feedback have you had from the public about NURSE-ON-CALL?

We get a lot of good feedback from the public. Many elderly callers often say they wish the service was around when they were young. Callers are also very grateful for the service being provided 24/7 as many call in the middle of the night seeking reassurance.

Compliments of the service

- A caller mentioned that NURSE-ON-CALL had saved her life last year. She was told to attend the ED immediately where she was found to be in liver failure. She thinks the service is fantastic.
- An elderly lady living alone with diabetes called recently as her diabetes was difficult to control. She has used service before and stated that she was very satisfied and reassured to have a 24/7 service available over the phone.

