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MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 13 August 2020

EASIER HOSPITAL ACCESS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

Victims of domestic and family violence will now have easier access to NSW public hospitals for the treatment of their injuries, as part of the NSW Government's COVID-19 response.

The NSW Government has changed its NSW hospital fees policy so that Medicare ineligible victims of domestic and family violence (DFV) – like those on Temporary Protection Visas – will no longer be required to report the crime to police in order to access public hospitals at no cost.

Attorney General and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence Mark Speakman said the change follows an [Australian Institute of Criminology report](#) that found DFV had risen during the pandemic, but a large proportion of victims were not reporting to police.

“Many women will choose to contact the Domestic Violence Line, specialist frontline domestic violence services or medical care before they're ready to report to police for a range of reasons, including fear of repercussions,” Mr Speakman said.

“Those suffering domestic violence need every lifeline we can give them, especially now when COVID-19 measures are potentially forcing victim-survivors into isolation in the same household as the perpetrators of their abuse.

“This reform is focused on removing obstacles for especially vulnerable victim-survivors to ensure immediate medical support is available and accessible when it's needed most.”

Health Minister Brad Hazzard said it is vital that people facing violence at home feel safe to seek support and care in our public hospitals, without fear of reprisal from perpetrators.

“A tragic, often hidden cost of the COVID-19 pandemic is the rise in violence on the homefront and fewer opportunities to reach out for support,” Mr Hazzard said.

“The NSW Government is helping to clear the way for victims of domestic and family violence to receive essential medical treatment and care in our hospitals, whenever they need it.”

If you or anyone you know is experiencing domestic violence, when it's safe to do so, you can contact the following supports:

- NSW Domestic Violence Line, for crisis counselling, referral or support on 1800 65 64 63;

- 1800 RESPECT on 1800 737 732 for sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling and support services;
- Link2Home on 1800 152 152 who can help refer women experiencing domestic violence to crisis accommodation; and
- Men's Referral Service for men who use violence, or their friends and family on 1300 766 491 or <https://ntv.org.au/>.

If you are in immediate danger or in an emergency, always contact Triple Zero (000).

For more information on services and supports, visit the NSW Government's 'Speak Out' webpage: <https://www.speakout.dcj.nsw.gov.au/>.