The Emergency Department isn't always your best option: community education campaign

World Social Marketing Conference

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Primary Health Networks (PHNs)

Federally funded not-for-profit organisations

Role

• increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services

• ensure patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

Brisbane North PHN covers a population of over 950,000

• Five State run hospitals with Emergency Departments
The problems:

- inappropriate use of emergency department (room)
- high waiting time to be seen; could be treated in primary care
- high cost of emergency department presentations vs management in primary care
- anecdotal feedback - worse after hours
Desktop audit

• review of emergency department data, tele-triage data, after hours family doctor usage
• One third of after hours presentations are category 4 or 5
• over 33,000 people > AU$12 million (2014-2015)
• equates to over 4 years of wasted waiting time
• parents, with children aged 0-15
• young people aged 20 - 35
Objectives

- improve awareness of the options for accessing after hours services and help people make appropriate informed choices when accessing services.
- help reduce the burden of unnecessary or inappropriate emergency department presentations.
Key research insights

• confirmed a lot of what we expected
• demonstrated the difference between rational and emotional responses
• showed that…
  • a trip to the emergency department is social currency
  • the guaranteed outcome
  • people were unsure of the alternatives
Attitudes towards … tele-triage (13HEALTH)

• 64% strongly agreed or agreed that it was a useful service
• but only 27% had ever accessed

Attitudes towards … after hours home doctors

• 47% strongly agreed or agreed that it was a good first option
• but only 28% had ever accessed
Attitudes towards … Symptom Checker

- **39%** strongly agreed or agreed looked up symptoms using Google
- suspect that many people understate their use of Dr Google
  
  “It can work against you – you type in back pain and it says you have cancer”

  “If it has a Government logo on it I’ll go on that.”

- Symptom Checker but **0%** unprompted awareness
Pause for thought

We’re looking for a way to train our audience on what to do next time someone they know needs medical attention after hours.

We want them to stop and consider their options before they head into the Emergency Department or call an ambulance.

But in the heat of the moment it’s hard to think clearly. So we’re asking the audience to make a plan now, so that they have a plan later.

IT’S ABOUT ESTABLISHING SOME EMERGENCY ALTERNATIVES.
Emergency alternatives

| GETTING WORRIED | Healthdirect Symptom Checker  
Get free customised medical information, including what to do next. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEED TO TALK NOW</td>
<td>Call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84). Get medical advice from a registered Nurse 24/7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEED TO SEE A DOCTOR</td>
<td>You can see a doctor 24/7. Call your GP or after hours GP service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>000 EMERGENCY</td>
<td>Serious illness? Accident? Suspect heart attack or stroke? Go to a Hospital Emergency Department or call 000 for an ambulance.</td>
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www.emergencyalternatives.org.au

- on the site people could access services, add to their mobile device home screen or order a fridge magnet
Driving traffic to www.emergencyalternatives.org.au

- series of scenarios representing common ED presentations in our area
- customised to our target audiences
- common childhood illnesses and symptoms experienced by young adults
- used them in online, social and in traditional media
Advertising samples
Advertising samples
Prompted awareness and relevance

Seen or heard the ad

- Yes: 54%
- No: 42%
- Don't know: 4%

How relevant was this ad personally?

- Very relevant: 34%
- Not at all relevant: 20%
- Of some relevance: 46%
Campaign diagnostics

You feel like you now understand that there are a number of alternatives for medical help and advice after hours 77%

You made a mental note to consider other options rather than the emergency department in the future 75%

You now know that an emergency department isn't always the best option for conditions that are not emergencies 74%

You now know that hospital emergency departments are only for emergencies 70%

You used one of the services as a result of having seen the ad 23%
### Evaluation

#### After hours presentations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change to prior year quarter (Jul-Sep 15 to Jul-Sep 16)</th>
<th>Brisbane North</th>
<th>Brisbane South</th>
<th>Statewide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>After hours Presentations</strong></td>
<td>-190 (-0.6%)</td>
<td>1,566 (4.5%)</td>
<td>7,082 (3.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children 0-14 yrs</strong></td>
<td>-410 (-7.5%)</td>
<td>-232 (-5.0%)</td>
<td>-308 (-0.8%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>^excluding flu like presentations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discharge status of those who ‘did not wait’ or ‘left after treatment commenced’</strong></td>
<td>-367 (-15.6%)</td>
<td>-93 (-3.8%)</td>
<td>-443 (-3.1%)</td>
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Questions