

New Organization Advocating For Better Access to Mental Health Care

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- A group of Monash University students have started a new advocacy group Advocates for Mental Health Access focused on access to mental health treatment
- They launched their #10isnotenough campaign, demanding the Health Minister (Greg Hunt) increase the number of medicare covered psychologist appointments from 10 to 18

Melbourne, Victoria - A student led advocacy group called Advocates for Mental Health Access (AMHA) has been formed from members of Monash University's Global Challenges cohort. The group aims to improve access to mental health care, reduce the stigma around mental health care and encourage preventive mental health treatments. Their #10isnotenough campaign, demanding the Health Minister increase the number of medicare covered psychologist appointments from 10 to 18, was launched in line with RUOK day on the 10th September.

In 2011, the government reduced the number of medicare covered psychological appointments as part of a mental healthcare plan from 18 to 10. The rationale behind this change was that 87% Australians did not use more than 10 sessions, and those who did should be referred.

AMHA's work with the youth community has shown that the maximum of 10 sessions is one of the limiting factors as to why people aren't accessing an appropriate amount of mental health care. Many individuals we spoke to who sought ongoing care for chronic mental health issues struggled with stretching 10 appointments out over 12 months, and were failed by alternative treatments. Many said that the long time between appointments made the appointments feel ineffective, starting again every time they go back.

As part of the campaign, Advocates for Mental Health Access has released a short documentary covering the opinions of young people on mental health and mental health care.

Greg Hunt has not yet responded to the requests.

See;

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8o5Pv3MDa8E&t=45s&ab_channel=AdvocatesforMentalHealthAccess

https://www.facebook.com/A4MHA/?view_public_for=115552033616714

<https://www.instagram.com/10isnotenough/?hl=en>

<https://josepha6599.wixsite.com/goatcoalition/about-us-copy-3>