

HELP PREVENT 1.25 MILLION 0-3 YEAR OLDS FROM BEING PUT AT RISK OF PSYCHIATRIC DRUGS

OUR CHILDREN ARE AT GRAVE RISK DUE TO RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE FINAL REPORT OF AN AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL INQUIRY INTO MENTAL HEALTH

The Final Report of the Inquiry states, "Costs have been rising over time with no clear indication that the mental health of the population has improved." Yet \$3.5 - \$4.2 billion is being demanded mostly to expand programs which are clearly failing because, if psychiatric treatments were working, there would be a reduction in children and adults requiring assistance. Current recommendations include:

1.25 MILLION ZERO TO THREE YEAR OLDS TO BE SCREENED FOR "MENTAL ILLNESS": We already have 2,312 Australian children aged 0-4 on a psychiatric drug and now it is recommended that 1.25 million 0-3 year olds are screened for "mental illness." The numbers of infants and toddlers on potentially dangerous mind-altering psychiatric drugs is set to greatly increase with the recommendation to screen this age group for "mental illness" or "emerging mental illness" (psychiatrists claim they can predict future mental illness by the use of an arbitrary list of questions, which is not possible).



The recommendation seems innocuous—checking emotional well-being, and of course we all want to see our children healthy. However, reading further the Final Report is very clear that what this really means is the potential for a percentage of the infants and toddlers to be diagnosed and put at risk of psychiatric drugs. State Governments will be asked to help fund this. [*Productivity Commission Mental Health Inquiry Report, Vol. 1, page 20, Vol. 2 pages 204, 205*]

LACK OF SCIENTIFIC TESTS: While medical diseases can be screened for and verified by physical tests, psychiatrists admit there are no tests to confirm any psychiatric diagnosis (no x-ray, scan, blood or urine test). Screening questions are so subjective that any child could be at risk of being labelled mentally ill and recommended for a prescription of psychiatric drugs.

Symptoms for so called psychiatric disorders for 0 to 3 year-olds include: irregular feeding, difficulty sleeping, crying, temper tantrums, losing track of a favourite stuffed animal and hyperactivity.

It is proposed that maternal and child nurses in community health services expand current physical checks to include behavioural screening. They would refer any identified child for a "final diagnosis," which will also be based on a subjective checklist.

The Productivity Commission, the Federal Government's main advisory body on economic policy have said there is no adequate data to assess whether the increased focus on infant emotional well-being has had a substantial effect on young children and their families. Despite this lack of evidence, the screening recommendation is still proposed, accompanied with more demands for money.

IN 2007/08 AUSTRALIA HAD BABIES UNDER ONE YEAR OLD ON PSYCHIATRIC DRUGS. At this time there were:

- 201 children aged under 3 on antidepressants, of which 48 were younger than 1 year old.
- 59 children aged under 3 on antipsychotics, with 5 younger than 1.
- 46 children aged under 3 on ADHD drugs.

BY 2018-19 THERE WERE A STAGGERING 222,220 CHILDREN AGED 0-17 ON A PSYCHIATRIC DRUG, 2,312 OF THOSE AGED BETWEEN 0 AND 4 YEARS OLD.

SCREENING OF 3 YEAR OLDS WAS SCRAPPED IN 2015: In 2012, a 3 year old's physical check called "Healthy Kids Check" was expanded to include screening for "mental illness" and was trialled at 8 Medicare Locals. Due to immense public criticism, this invasive screening was scrapped in 2015. Yet, now the same guidelines could be used to screen 3 to 4 year olds as was used in the dumped Expanded Healthy Kids Check. Symptoms from this check include: fidgety, easily distracted, acts as if driven by a motor and doesn't listen to rules. When New Zealand introduced behavioural screening of 4 year-olds, within four years, prescriptions of antidepressants to those aged 0 to 4 years old increased by 140%.

PSYCHIATRY'S ABUSIVE TREATMENTS: There is no evidence in the Final Report that the use of electroshock was investigated as a "treatment" for children and adults. In 2019/20 Medicare funded 35,166 electroshock "treatments." Electroshock can cause brain damage, permanent memory loss, cardiovascular complications and death and should be banned.

WASTED TAXPAYERS' MONEY: Mental health spending has increased 68% in the past ten years, now reaching nearly \$10.6 billion, without accountability or positive results. Conflicts of interest between psychiatrists, mental health support groups and pharmaceutical companies were not investigated for their potential role in the soaring costs and harm from psychiatric drugs. When the very science behind something is so wrong and the treatments offered are harmful, no amount of money thrown at it will improve the system.

WHO CONDUCTED THE INQUIRY: The inquiry was conducted by Australia's Productivity Commission, the Australian Governments' main review and advisory body on economic policy. Prof. Harvey Whiteford was an associate commissioner for this inquiry. He is the psychiatrist who designed and oversaw implementation of Australia's National Mental Health Strategy (which commenced in 1992). Between 2008 and 2012 alone, his company, Harvey Whiteford Medical PTY LTD, received more than \$1.1 million from the Department of Health for providing planning and services for national mental health reform etc.



database revealed there were 1,907 deaths linked to antidepressants and antipsychotics. To ensure this life saving recommendation occurs, please phone, write or email the below Ministers.

SOLUTIONS: There is no doubt that children and adults get depressed, anxious or even act psychotic. The issue is how they are helped. They should be given holistic, humane care that improves their condition. Key is finding the cause of the problem which can vary greatly for each person and rectifying this. Proper medical tests can determine if there is an undiagnosed and untreated medical condition manifesting as a "psychiatric disorder." Medical doctors also recommend a good diet, sufficient sleep and exercise. Facilities should be quiet, safe havens where adults and children voluntarily seek help without fear of indefinite incarceration and terrifying treatment. They need places where they can get workable and accountable help for their problems. The existing money spent needs to be re-directed into proven workable solutions.

AN EXCELLENT FINAL REPORT RECOMMENDATION is that the Australian Government should require that all mental health prescriptions include a clear and prominent statement saying that clinicians should have discussed possible side effects and proposed evidence based alternatives to psychiatric drugs prior to prescribing. This is vital as by December 2019, Australia's drug regulatory agency

The findings of the Final Report are being investigated by a Federal Parliamentary Committee to determine which recommendations will be implemented. More hearings will be held during 2021. The Committee's final report is due by 1 November 2021.

TAKE ACTION

Visit, phone, write or email the below Ministers and do the following:

Advise them of the 0-3 year olds recommendation and request they do not support this recommendation nor support funding for it.

Prime Minister: Hon Scott Morrison
PO Box 6022, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600
Emails can only be sent from his website:
www.pm.gov.au/contact-your-pm

Opposition Leader: Hon Anthony Albanese
PO Box 6022, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600
Phone: 02 6277 4022 • **Email:** A.Albanese.MP@aph.gov.au

Treasurer: Hon Josh Frydenberg
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Shadow Treasurer: Dr Jim Chalmers
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Minister for Health: Hon Greg Hunt
PO Box 6022, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600
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Shadow Minister for Health: Hon Chris Bowen
PO Box 6022, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600
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Leader of Opposition in Senate: Senator the Hon Penny Wong
PO Box 6237, Halifax St. Adelaide SA 5000
Phone: 08 8212 8272 • **Email:** senator.wong@aph.gov.au

Deputy Leader of Opposition in Senate:
Senator the Hon Kristina Keneally
PO Box W4, Parramatta Westfield, NSW 2150
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Please also contact your local Federal Member of Parliament and local Federal Senator at:
www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/

Share this Fact Sheet with Others: Contact CCHR for free copies or log onto cchr.org.au to print additional copies.

WARNING: No one should stop taking any psychiatric drug without the advice and assistance of a competent medical doctor.

Log onto cchr.org.au to see references for the above and more information.

Download the Final Report here: <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/mental-health/report>

To read about the Parliamentary Committee Inquiry and upcoming hearings:

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Mental_Health_and_Suicide_Prevention

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CCHR was established by the Church of Scientology and Professor of Psychiatry, the late Dr Thomas Szasz in 1969 to investigate and expose psychiatric violations of human rights.

