Do You 'Know Who To Turn To' When You're Ill?

NHS awareness campaign unveiled to help people access the right medical care

People in Grampian are being urged to 'Know Who To Turn To' when they or someone they know is unwell, as part of a new awareness campaign which launches in Aberdeen today (28 May 2009).

The campaign, led by NHS Grampian and supported by the Scottish Government, has been designed to raise awareness of the wide range of healthcare services available through the NHS, in a bid to help people to choose the service best suited to treat their illness or injury.

Throughout June, over 220,000 households across the NHS Grampian region will be sent a campaign leaflet, detailing the healthcare options available, how to access them and the type of conditions most effectively treated by the following NHS services:

- Accident and Emergency / 999
- Minor Injuries Unit
- NHS Out of Hours Service
- GP
- Pharmacist
The 'Know Who To Turn To' campaign will also highlight the role of self-care in the treatment of illnesses such as a sore throat or a cold, and the importance of having a well-stocked medicine cabinet to deal with minor ailments.

Research has highlighted that people in Grampian are most likely to self-care when they themselves are feeling unwell, however GPs are most likely to be the first port of call when a vulnerable person such as a child or elderly person is ill. Latest statistics show that approximately 40 per cent of GP appointments are made for minor ailments, and 75 per cent of Accident and Emergency attendances are for minor illness or injury.

Pauline Strachan, deputy medical director for NHS Grampian, said:

"When you're ill, it's vital to know who to turn to for the right help. Through this campaign we want to be sure people in Grampian have an understanding of the wide range of services on offer and how best to access them.

"Selecting the right service not only ensures you receive the right treatment in the shortest possible time, it also helps the NHS run efficiently, freeing up emergency and out of hours services for those who need them most."

Shona Robison, Minister for Public Health, said:

"The Scottish Government is delighted to support the 'Know Who To Turn To' campaign, because it's absolutely crucial that when people are unwell they know which health service is the most appropriate one to help them. For example, it's now possible to get a whole range of minor ailment advice and treatment from your local community pharmacy, which could prevent an unnecessary visit to your GP or hospital accident and emergency department.

"By having the right advice, people will be able to make the kind of informed treatment choices which could save them time and mean that NHS resources are targeted most appropriately."

The campaign, which involves radio and outdoor advertising, is being piloted in the Grampian area over the next three months.

People can find out more on key NHS services and the medical assistance they provide at www.know-who-to-turn-to.com or by calling the free healthline on 0500 20 20 30.

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For further information, please contact Corporate Communications, NHS Grampian, (01224 554400)
Notes:

- The research into awareness of NHS services is taken from an omnibus study conducted by Progressive Partnership between 20 March and 19 April 2009.

- The statistics on usage of GP and A&E services are taken from 'Self Care - A Real Choice, Self Care Support - A Practical Option' published by the Department of Health in January 2005.