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NSW Ambulance campaign urges public to assess whether their Urgency is an Emergency before calling Triple Zero (000)

NSW Ambulance has officially launched a new campaign aimed at reducing unnecessary pressure on emergency ambulance and hospital resources during the peak winter period.

The social media campaign "Is Your Urgency an Emergency?" aims to encourage the community to #MakeTheRightCall to get the right care.

Commissioner Ray Creen, Chief Executive NSW Ambulance, said the online campaign isn't designed to discourage people from calling Triple Zero (000). Instead, it aims to educate users about the role of NSW Ambulance paramedics and the treatment pathways patients with coughs, colds or sprained limbs may be referred to.

"NSW Ambulance Triple Zero (000) call takers answer a call for help on average every 26 seconds. Just 10 per cent of these calls are for patients with life-threatening conditions," Commissioner Creen said.

"NSW Ambulance paramedics attending non-medical emergencies could mean a patient with a life threatening emergency may have to wait, potentially putting their life at risk."

The winter months are traditionally one of the busiest times for our paramedics and unfortunately the statistics show that around 40 per cent of people ring Triple Zero (000) when their condition is low acuity or non-urgent for an illness or injury which could be more appropriately managed by other health providers.

In order to better use its resources and the clinical skills of paramedics, NSW Ambulance has embraced a range of treatment pathways which will ensure patients get the most appropriate out-of-hospital care for their condition.

"Just as every patient who presents to an Emergency Department (ED) is not admitted to hospital, not every patient who calls Triple Zero (000) needs a stretcher ambulance or paramedic.

"During these busy winter months, when demand is high, we need to make sure NSW Ambulance resources are used appropriately and effectively and not tied up with non-emergency situations," Commissioner Creen said.

The colourful campaign is made up of four posters which clearly show the gamut of treatment pathways available to patients, before or after they make a Triple Zero (000) call. It also includes an emergency gauge with common conditions listed in a sliding scale from non-urgent to emergency.

This campaign educates patients with non life-threatening or non-urgent conditions not to expect a double crewed stretcher ambulance response. Patients may be referred by NSW Ambulance Triple Zero (000) call takers or paramedics to *Healthdirect* Australia, which is staffed by registered nurses, or to the After Hours Medical Deputising Service which will provide a doctor to the patient's home.

"It's important to remember that Triple Zero (000) is for emergencies and although we will answer every Triple Zero (000) call and provide medical assistance, phoning for an ambulance is not always the right call to make to get the right care," Commissioner Creen said.

"NSW Ambulance Triple Zero (000) control centre staff and paramedics are health experts so the community needs to trust their ability to make the right decision."

Save Triple Zero (000) for saving lives



For non-emergency situations, people can always seek advice from:

Healthdirect on 1800 022 222

Pharmacy/Chemist

Local General Practitioners (GPs)

Medical Deputising Service

“This campaign empowers the community to make that decision themselves by being aware there are other treatment pathways available instead of thinking Triple Zero (000) is the only option,” Commissioner Green said.

“I would call on all members of the public to really think before making that call. You can help save lives by assessing if your urgency is an emergency and ensuring you make the right call.”

To see the campaign, follow NSW Ambulance on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and visit the NSW Ambulance website.

Save Triple Zero (000) for saving lives