

From:
To: laehsc@parliament.wa.gov.au
Date: Fri, May 9, 2008 4:11 pm
Subject: FW: Submission to inquiry into general health screening of children at pre-primary and primary school level.

> Dr David Worth
> Principal Research Officer
> Education & Health Standing Committee
> Legislative Assembly
> Parliament House
> PERTH WA 6000
>
> 8 May 2008
>
> Dear Dr Worth
>
> Submission to inquiry into general health screening of children at
> pre-primary and primary school level.
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> As part of our background to this submission for the Public Health
> Association of Australia (WA Branch), we have interviewed school
> teachers and allied health professionals, and reviewed the NHMRC
> report of 2002 on child health screening and surveillance.
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> Many professionals in the field expressed a frustration that they
> just do not have the time or resources to deal adequately with
> children with developmental, health etc related problems. Teachers
> were especially concerned that as well as their already
> increasingly onerous work loads, they have to devote excessive
> time to dealing with a small percentage of children who have
> these problems, with respect carrying out 'diagnoses or tests', to
> filling in forms, meeting their parent or carers etc . This is
> particularly a problem in pre-primary schools in disadvantaged
> communities. Concern was also expressed about the already heavy
> workloads of school nurses.
>
> And they were concerned that many parents just did not take
> their children to the services when appointments were made for
> them.
>
> They also agreed that it was not likely to be of any benefit to
> increase screening for these children unless these services were
> also expanded to deal with the situation adequately.
>
> In light of this 'evidence' and the recommendations of the NHMRC,
> it appears that any increase in population screening of children
> at pre-primary and primary schools is not advisable unless
> substantial resources are available to ensure adequate followup
> etc.

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> A priority rather, would be to provide teachers of children with
> developmental, health etc related problems, adequate resourcing to
> deal with them in school time; and adequate resourcing to the
> allied health professionals who take them on as cases.

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> Sincerely

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