

# **NATIONAL HEALTH LINE SYMPOSIUM**

## **Making the Right Connections**

### **Presentation # 5**

**Improving Sustainability of the Health System**

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# Thesis

Health lines make significant enhancements to the current system of health care without incurring excessive cost.

# Improve access to primary health care service

Health lines can provide near instant access to the Canadian health care system, reducing the need to go to one's own physician, a private clinic or an Emergency Department.

# Positively impact health outcomes

Health lines can actually save lives. Some callers with an unrecognized, serious condition have been encouraged to seek immediate assistance which they had originally not intended to seek—for example being alerted to a potentially lethal adverse drug event.

# Encourage health promotion and disease/injury prevention

Health lines serve to shift the focus from care providers and the care system to the individual. They can be used to provide information about health promotion *per se* and/or about specific health promoting related activities.

# Facilitate more appropriate utilization of health care services

Emergency Departments and physician offices are flooded with non-emergent cases. Health lines nurses provide (under strict protocol) dispositions that lead to decisions made by callers to utilize the appropriate health care service.

# Improve quality of care

Callers consistently report that they receive the information they require to make an appropriate decision about health care. Health lines improve quality of health care by connecting people to the fuller range of services, providing competent/credible disseminators of health information, responding promptly (24/7), and reassuring callers .

# Maximize health professional resources

Health human resources is a key area of concern at the present time. Health lines can play a key role in bringing health professionals back into the work force or providing more satisfying options for employment.



# Have a positive economic impact and enhance health care sustainability

Above all, health lines are valued by the public they serve. People have the assurance that health advice and information are accessible at a moments notice. This is of particular value to people living in rural and remote communities.

# Health lines are reasonably priced

Examples from experience:

Cost per call range \$10.00 - \$37.00 / call.

Cost per call minute \$2.18/minute

Cost of service per capita \$5.00 - \$7.00

# Costing a Health Line

Call

## Volume

**Fixed Expenses** 20%

Management, Administration and IT  
Management Salaries & Benefits  
Operations Salaries & Benefits  
Health Files Salaries & Benefits  
Facilities – Recurring Expenses  
Communication & Technology  
Professional Fees  
Implementation Costs

**Variable Expenses** 80%

Nursing Staff Costs  
Call Centre Staffing Costs  
Health Files Staffing Costs  
Recruitment and Training  
Employee related expenses  
Telecommunications  
Miscellaneous  
Translation Services  
Trade Show Expenses (advertising)

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Call

Cost Per