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Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

Guy Barnett, Minister for Health

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Ensuring Tasmanians get the right health care

Knowing how to access the most appropriate health care in Tasmania is the key to receiving the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

Almost 40 per cent of all presentations to Emergency Departments in Tasmania in June were not urgent and may have been appropriate for treatment in an alternative health care setting.

There are a range of treatment pathways Tasmanians can access depending on the nature and urgency of their health concern, including virtual care and advice, mental health support, pharmacies, general practices, and our new Urgent Care Clinics.

Minister for Health, Guy Barnett, said it was important for Tasmanians to be familiar with the range of non-emergency services available to make sure they receive the most appropriate care.

“By accessing the best treatment option for their needs, Tasmanians can get the care they need more quickly and help ease the pressure on the health system,” Minister Barnett said.

“This can help free up time for general practitioners and nurses, making it easier to get an appointment when they have a more serious or complex condition.”

Many common conditions can be treated at home with over-the-counter medications for things like pain relief and cough and cold remedies.

“Our hospitals are always busy, and we know hospital isn’t always the most appropriate place for patients to receive health care,” Minister Barnett said.

“It is important Tasmanians are aware of the different treatment options available,

depending on the nature and urgency of their health concern.

“By utilising alternatives to the Emergency Department, where appropriate, Tasmanians can receive the right care for their needs, while also helping to reduce pressure on our hospitals.”

These options have been increased with the recent introduction of the Medicare Urgent Care Clinic at Launceston Medical Centre, 247 Wellington St, Launceston – from 2pm-8pm, seven days a week.

The Urgent Care Clinics provide treatment for urgent illnesses and injuries which require treatment that day, but do not require a presentation to a hospital Emergency Department.

If you are feeling unwell, call Healthdirect on 1800 022 222 to speak to a Registered Nurse as a great first option. They are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and can give you advice on whether you should manage your condition at home, book an appointment with a GP, or go to an Emergency Department.

“If you need emergency medical care for a serious injury or illness, you should call triple zero (000) or go to the nearest ED – where our health workers will be there to care for you,” Minister Barnett said.

“However, if you present to the ED with a less urgent injury or illness, you may have to wait longer than you would with one of these more appropriate alternatives.”

For more information on the non-emergency health care options available in Tasmania, visit: www.health.tas.gov.au/rightcare