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## Is your Doctor Closed this Easter? Avoid a Trip to the Emergency Department...

Wentworth Healthcare, the provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network, is reminding the community that the hospital is not the only option when your doctor is closed over the upcoming Easter and Anzac Day public holidays.

Wentworth Healthcare CEO, Lizz Reay, said that after hours or urgent care services offer an important alternative to the emergency department for urgent, but not life-threatening, injuries or illnesses, and in cases where your regular GP may not be open.

"If you or your family needs medical assistance over the upcoming public holidays, there are a range of options available. Our **DoctorClosed.com.au** website can help local residents to search for a GP who is open after hours, for doctors who can make home visits or for your closest Urgent Care Service. You can also use the online symptom checker, find pharmacies that are open, or talk to a health professional 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling the *healthdirect* helpline on **1800 022 222**," said Ms Reay.

Ms Reay added that the Doctor Closed website is accessible for multicultural communities, with translated pages in six different languages.

In the Hawkesbury area, the **North Richmond Urgent Care Service** is open 365 days a year, including Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday and Anzac Day, from 8:00am to 8:00pm.

"To access the service, people need to call *healthdirect* on **1800 022 222**. A registered nurse will assess your condition and then refer you to the best place for your needs. This may include an in-person appointment at the North Richmond Urgent Care Service, a telehealth appointment with the virtualKIDS or virtualGP services, or escalating your care to NSW Ambulance if required," said Ms Reay.

The North Richmond Urgent Care Service provides access to GPs and nurses who can treat a range of illnesses and injuries that are deemed urgent, but not life-threatening, such as minor wounds that need stitches, suspected broken bones and skin infections that need antibiotics. All services are free for Medicare Card holders.

In addition to these services, Ms Reay mentioned that if you or someone you know is experiencing mental health concerns or crisis, to remember that the **Hawkesbury Medicare Mental Health Centre** located at 1 Musson Lane, Richmond, is available for free walk-in support, without the need for a Medicare Card. The Centre is open Monday-Wednesday and Friday 1:00pm to 5:00pm, Thursday and Saturday 1:00pm to 7:00pm, and **public holidays 1:00pm to 7:00pm (excluding Easter Sunday)**.

"We are proud to support these after hours services in our region, offering our community alternative options to going to a hospital, especially during long weekends and public holidays when wait times can be long and emergency departments are often under additional pressure."

"I encourage everyone to visit **DoctorClosed.com.au** to find out what other local healthcare options are available," Ms Reay concluded.

In an emergency always call 000. If you or someone you know is in crisis, call Lifeline on 13 11 14. For those seeking urgent mental health care, you can also call the NSW Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511, which is available 24/7 including public holidays.