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**PATIENT DATA SHOWS EXPANSION OF MENTAL HEALTH PACKAGE IS
CRITICAL**

Today the West Australian has [reported](#) exclusive data showing one in four Australians on a mental health plan with access to subsidised psychology sessions had already reached their cap of ten sessions.

This new data shows the immediate need for additional mental health services and support during the pandemic.

Every person affected by this crisis must be able to access mental health support. Financial hardship should be no barrier to getting the treatments people need.

The right thing for the Government to do is to extend the number of sessions available under Medicare during this crisis.

The data also shows that for clients accessing a subsidised mental health care plan *'around half were either nearing the 10-session annual limit or had reached it, and were considered to require further sessions'*.

Labor understands that a high percentage of the community will have stress and anxiety during this pandemic. With mental health flagged as a priority by Scott Morrison and Greg Hunt during the COVID health emergency, it is critical that a response meets the demand for mental health services.

And if Mr Hunt is claiming the number of psychology sessions had been considered by the Productivity Commission's report which was handed to Government on 30 June, he should release the report publicly.

The release of this report gives Australia a chance to reform policy across education, housing, the workplace and the justice and health systems to address better mental health for Australians.

We urge Scott Morrison and Greg Hunt to release this report urgently so much needed reform in the sector can start – including the immediate need for more Medicare subsidised mental health treatments.

The Government would have Labor's full support in releasing the Productivity Commission report and expanding the mental health care plan scheme during this time.

For [24/7](#) crisis support and suicide prevention services call Lifeline on 13 11 14. Other services include Suicide Call Back Service: [1300 659 467](#), Beyondblue: [1300 22 4636](#), Kids Helpline: [1800 551 800](#), MensLine Australia: [1300 789 978](#)

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