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Mentally ill should see GP

THE importance of treating physical health problems in people with a mental illness is the focus of a new campaign in Fremantle.

The HealthRight Project involving the University of WA was created in response to the Duty to Care Report, which highlighted some alarming statistics on the physical health of people with mental illness.

"The study found that this group of people are more likely to die from preventable physical illness such as heart disease and cancer and that these diseases often go untreated and undiagnosed," project officer Ann Bates said.

"According to the report, death rates from preventable causes are two-and-a-half times higher for mental health consumers than the general population."

She advised people with a mental illness to see a GP annually for a physical health check.

The project will incorporate a peer support program to help people access GPs. Visit www.healthright.org.au.