



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2014-2015
Brendan Smyth MLA (Chair), Mary Porter MLA (Deputy-Chair),
Giulia Jones MLA, Yvette Berry MLA



**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Asked by Mrs Jones on 20 June 2014: Ms Gallagher took on notice the following question(s):

Ref HD-No 6: Hansard Transcript 20 June 2014, page 43

In relation to community sector mental health programs

MRS JONES: Can you get back to us with a breakdown of what those services are that we work with the community, where the money is spent and how much is spent? Also I guess that is more of a policy sort of question for the minister, what can we do to actually see a shift in the numbers because the numbers are not changing the presentations, the effect of this on the community.

There has been a big change I think amongst the younger generation, certainly in our attitudes towards this area. People are more willing to seek out specialist help, but it is just not coming off the incidents and the effect yet and if we really want to see change there have got to be some measurables.

Dr Brown: We currently do have a plan for the ACT that is around promotion, prevention, early intervention and that plan is due to finish this year, and we are currently working on what will be the successor for that. We are looking at a plan that actually goes across the whole of the ACT government, not just focusing just on mental health around this area. But certainly we can get you some information.

MRS JONES: Can I get a briefing on that as well if you undertake that work? Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Ms Berry with a supplementary on this issue.

MRS JONES: So just to clarify you will get back to me with those figures?

Dr Brown: Yes.

Katy Gallagher MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

The ACT Government has responsibility for providing tertiary mental health care and for the provision of some community health care. The Commonwealth has responsibilities for primary mental health services. Examples of Commonwealth funded mental health promotion and prevention programs include beyondblue; MindMatters and KidsMatter, Access to Allied Psychological Services and the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care Program.

The 2014-15 ACT Health budget includes additional funding for suicide prevention. Funding has been allocated as follows:

- supporting people who have experienced the traumatic death of another person and are involved in current ACT coronial processes (\$150,000);
- additional mental health support to the Mental Health Community Policing Initiative (MHCPI) (\$150,000);
- supporting research into the factors affecting suicide of ACT residents (\$150,000 for 2 years); and
- promoting community awareness of suicide and suicide prevention through expansion of the *Let's Talk for Suicide Prevention* campaign (\$50,000).

Recurrent mental health community funding for promotion, prevention and early intervention activities funded by the ACT Government in 2012-13 included:

- suicide prevention and mental health literacy education through the OzHelp Foundation Inc (\$516,781);
- mental health literacy education and education on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder by peer education through Mental Illness ACT (MIEACT) (\$361,035);
- mental health information and referral through the Mental Health Foundation (\$107,472);
- mental health information and referral for the gay lesbian, transgender and bisexual community through A Genda Agenda (\$150,000);
- raising awareness of perinatal depression among families and the wider community through the Post Natal Anti Depression Initiative (PANDSI) (\$219,180);
- support for a range of women's mental health and wellbeing programs, including Majura and Brindabella Women's programs and Marymead (\$108,234);
- programs to support men and boys through Menslink (\$336,243);
- programs to support vulnerable men (\$336,243);
- deliver psychosocial supports via community arts and leisure programs through Belconnen Community Services (\$518,852);
- support for carers through Carers ACT (\$238,827);
- support for young people at risk of developing a mental illness through the Belconnen Community Services Bungee program (\$332,566);
- provision of social and emotional programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through Winnunga (\$79,236);
- provision of social and emotional programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through Gugan Gulwan (\$159,596).
- community sector support for people with a mental illness requesting intensive support through the Housing and Rehabilitation Initiative (\$1,100,000). The funding through the National Partnership Agreement on Improving Public Hospitals concludes at the end of the 2013-14 financial year. Participants should be eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and will continue to be supported through Health funding until their transition to the NDIS;
- provision of primary mental health care to refugees and migrants through Companion House (\$297,124);
- Social Ventures Australia (\$139,479);
- ACT Government contribution to support the work of beyondblue (\$70,000);
- support of Mental Health Week (\$25,000);
- deliver of the Mental Health Scholarships program to support people experiencing a mental illness acquire Certificate IV training in mental health or welfare (\$33,088).

In a public presentation at the Australian National University, Professor Jorm argued that greater investment in promotion is required to reduce the incidence of emerging mental illness. Professor Jorm argued that, to date, we have not seen significant change in the effect of these programs at a population level.

Being a small jurisdiction, the ACT relies on Commonwealth data collections, such as those from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. While some data are reported at a jurisdiction level, where this is not the case, care should be taken when extrapolating from these data.

ACT Health, in partnership with the Australian National University, Centre for Mental Health Research have evaluated the implementation of the ACT Government's mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention framework *Building a Strong Foundation: A Framework for Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing in the ACT 2009-2014*ⁱ (*Building a Strong Foundation*) and the suicide prevention strategy *Managing the Risk of Suicide: A Suicide Prevention Strategy for the ACT 2009-2014*ⁱⁱ (*Managing the Risk of Suicide*).

Building a Strong Foundation and *Managing the Risk of Suicide* take a whole-of-government/whole-of-population approach to promotion and prevention. Annual reports on the first four years of implementation have been tabled in the Assembly.

Recognising the significant overlaps in mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention and suicide prevention, the new framework will combine these issues. The Framework will identify high level outcomes, which all government Directorates will be invited to address in their business plans. It will cover the period 2015-2025.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2014-2015

Signature:



Date:

30.6.14

By the Minister for Health, Katy Gallagher MLA

ⁱ ACT Health (2009) *Building a Strong Foundation: A Framework for Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing in the ACT 2009-2014*. Australian Capital Territory: Canberra. www.health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=sendfile&ft=p&fid=1369289573

ⁱⁱ ACT Health (2009). *Managing the Risk of Suicide: A Suicide Prevention Strategy for the ACT, 2009-2014*. Australian Capital Territory: Canberra. www.health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=dlpubpoldoc&document=1865