



STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING
Mr Johnathan Davis MLA (Chair), Mr James Milligan MLA (Deputy Chair),
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

Inquiry into ACT Budget 2021–22
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Johnathan Davis MLA: To ask the Minister for Health

Ref: Canberra Health Services, Budget paper C, page number 40, Output 1.2: Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services

In relation to: AOD Services

1. I note the significant investment in alcohol and other drug services. Does the Minister understand this investment to be big enough to meet the significant demand that the sector is under?

Minister Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. The 2021-22 ACT Budget includes almost \$11 million in additional funding for harm minimisation over four years, including:
 - \$580,000 to expand our needle and syringe programs, reducing the impact of blood borne viruses;
 - \$400,000 for a proven harm reduction approach with the development of a service model for the ACT Medically Supervised Injecting Facility, including scoping potential locations;
 - \$803,000 to commence design work on the redevelopment of the Watson Health Precinct to deliver a world class, community-led alcohol and other drug and mental health treatment precinct for those most in need;
 - \$260,000 to pilot an Australian-first fixed-site pill testing service;
 - \$7.6 million to continue delivering health services for the alcohol and drug court clients; and
 - almost \$1 million to respond to the immediate pressures caused by our recent Covid-19 lockdown.

The Government has also made investments to improve AOD facilities, with \$1.6 million in funding provided during 2020-21 and 2021-22 to upgrade Karralika's Fadden and Isabella Plains sites.

These investments build on the \$22 million dollars the ACT Government provides in annual recurrent funding to support a comprehensive suite of alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment and support services.

ACT AOD treatment services provided over 6000 closed treatment episodes to 4080 clients in 2019-20. On a per capita basis this level of funding has enabled the ACT to provide treatment to 1,100 people per 100,000 population, compared to just 624 people per 100,000 population nationally. This demonstrates that the ACT system is more accessible and treating more people than its state counterparts, particularly given that Canberra has the lowest level of drug use of any capital city.

Notwithstanding these figures it remains important to continue to assess the AOD treatment needs of the ACT community. To this end ACT Health in partnership with the AOD sector and the Capital Health Network is undertaking a comprehensive analysis of population needs to shape the future of the AOD treatment sector to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Signature:



Date:

3 / 11 / 21

By the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA