



Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023 **ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

Asked by **MS LEANNE CASTLEY** on 16 November 2023: **MINISTER STEPHEN-SMITH** took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: Hansard uncorrected proof transcript 16 November 2023 [PAGE 15]

In relation to: Difference between Nurse Practitioner and General Practitioner service scope.

- 1) Minister, you said that the walk-in centres can do almost everything that an urgent care centre can. What can it not do?

MINISTER STEPHEN-SMITH: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. The Walk-in Centre scope of practice has expanded a number of times since Walk-in Centres were first established in the ACT, including the recent change to treat children between the ages of 1 and 2 years.

The expected scope of conditions to be managed by Urgent Care Clinics is set out in the Department of Health and Aged Care's *Operational Guidance for Urgent Care Clinics*. ACT Walk-in Centres will increase their scope in alignment with this guidance to provide short-term, episodic care for urgent conditions that are not immediately life threatening. Scope and procedures explicitly outlined in this guidance that ACT Walk-in Centres will not deliver at this time are:

- the provision of intravenous fluids or intravenous antibiotics;
- urinary catheter management and changes for males and females;
- bridging prescriptions for chronic conditions; and
- treatment for children under one year old.

Walk-in Centres will also not provide electrocardiograms (ECG) or international normalised ratio (INR) testing.

These decisions do not necessarily reflect differences in the scope of practice for Advanced Practice Nurses and Nurse Practitioners compared with General Practitioners, but rather what is considered appropriate for a service targeted at providing short-term, episodic care for urgent conditions. In addition, they take account of the range of other services available in the relatively small geographic

area of the ACT to support the management of chronic disease, as well as the need to ensure Walk-in Centres maintain reasonable wait times.

Canberra Health Services will further consider potential expansions to Walk-in Centre scope once the new arrangements have settled and demand patterns under the current proposed scope are clearer.

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

Signature:



Date:

10/1/24

By the Minister for Health, Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA