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**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

TENTH ASSEMBLY

Maternal, Child and Family Health Report – Canberra Health Services

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Canberra
Health
Services



ACT
Government

Maternal, Child and Family Health

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Contents

Non-take up of First Home Visits	2
Introduction.....	2
Purpose	2
Outcome.....	3
Caveat.....	3
'ASK MACH' Project Report.....	4
Purpose	4
Background	4
The 'ASK MACH' Project.....	4
Staff and Consumer Feedback.....	4
Project outcomes.....	5
Outcomes	5

Tables

Table 1. Referrals for Non-take up of First Home Visits	2
Table 2. Reason for not accessing service for Non-take up of First Home Visits.....	2



Non-take up of First Home Visits

Introduction

Following the Auditor General's Report No. 7/2019 examining the referral processes for the support of vulnerable children, the ACT Government agreed that Maternal, Child and Family Health (MACH) examine opportunities to improve uptake of first home visits (also known as universal home visits).

Comprehensive support and information is provided to all consumers on where they can access services in the ACT community to support the health care for their child and family, this includes the Maternal, Child and Family Health and the Early Parenting Support (EPS) phone line.

Purpose

To provide a summary of the families within the ACT community that do not access Maternal, Child and Family Health services.

This document sets out a summary of ACT birth referrals that choose not to access the Maternal, Child and Family Health first home visiting service. It is important to note this data does not consider if the consumer declined first home visiting but goes on to access other Maternal, Child and Family Health services including new parent groups, child health clinics, breastfeeding support, or the Early Parenting Support phone line.

Table 1. Referrals for Non-take up of First Home Visits

Referrals January 2023 – December 2023	
Total number of referrals received	5046
Number of consumers not accessing first home visiting service	162
Total % of consumers not accessing first home visiting service	3%

Table 2. Reason for not accessing service for Non-take up of First Home Visits

Reasons for not accessing services January 2023 – December 2023	
Non - Medicare eligible	128 (79%)



Reasons for not accessing services January 2023 – December 2023	
Unable to contact	2 (1%)
Will access GP	24 (15%)
Declined and /or moved interstate	8 (5%)

Outcome

Maternal, Child and Family Health respects the consumer’s right to choose their health care provider. The analysis of the data found no evidence of systemic issues with the uptake of first home visits and consequently nil action will be taken.

In collaboration with the Digital Health Record, from July 2023, MACH is able to collect instances and reasons for non-take up of first home visits.

Caveat

Due to the Digital Health Record not capturing this data prior to July 2023, it was obtained by a manual analysis of electronic records and is subject to human error.



'ASK MACH' Project Report

Purpose

To provide a summary report of the Women, Youth and Children Community Health Programs (WYCCHP) Maternal, Child and Family Health (MACH) 'ASK MACH' quality improvement project.

Background

In 2022, through a Governance redesign, early childhood immunisation moved from under MACH to the Child and Adolescent Immunisation Team (CAIT). A primary role of CAIT nurses is to provide immunisations and do not need Child and Family Health qualifications. Given they do not hold Child and Family Health qualifications they are unable to support families who ask for advice outside of their scope when attending immunisation appointments. In these instances CAIT nurses refer families to the MACH Early Parenting Support (EPS) line or Central Health Intake for advice and support from a MACH nurse or midwife.

The 'ASK MACH' Project

A quality improvement pilot project titled 'ASK MACH' was designed to test the co-location of MACH and CAIT clinics to provide access to MACH staff to answer questions raised by parents attending immunisation appointments.

The eight-week project ran from 2 June 2023 to 28 July 2023, at Belconnen, Lanyon and Ngunnawal.

Parents accessing 'ASK MACH' appointments were allocated a 15-minute consultation with MACH staff who answered questions and booked regular MACH appointments, and/or referred patients to specialist community services where required.

'ASK MACH' consultations included:

- review, observation and assessment of infant/child general health and development as this related to the questions asked by parents;
- offering strategies to support parenting; growth monitoring; promoting family, parent and carer wellbeing; and child health checks/screenings where required.

Staff and Consumer Feedback

- Over the eight-week period, 83 consumers accessed an 'ASK MACH' consult.
- All consumers were asked to complete a survey.
 - 18 of 83 (22 per cent) consumers completed the survey;
 - 100 per cent of respondents found 'ASK MACH' helpful;
 - 89 per cent of respondents already accessed MACH services.



- Early Childhood Immunisation staff reported that 'ASK MACH' was helpful.
- Most 'ASK MACH' staff felt that the initiative was beneficial.
- 'ASK MACH' staff identified the inconsistent demand for services.

Project outcomes

- 'ASK MACH' was evaluated post completion.
- While staff and consumer feedback was positive, the ad hoc nature of demand made service delivery inefficient.
- 'ASK MACH' saw an average of ten consumers per week for three days of staff resource.
- In a usual MACH clinic, this same resource would see 27 consumers per week.
- The majority of survey respondents already accessed other MACH services, indicating that 'ASK MACH' was not reviewing consumers who were otherwise missed.

Outcomes

'ASK MACH' is deemed not a viable service delivery model due to the ad hoc nature of demand and underutilisation of available capacity. As the majority of consumers were already aware of existing MACH services, the staffing was directed to provide increased capacity in MACH clinics.

Strategies to address the need to respond to parental queries arising during immunisation appointments will be implemented in early 2024. These are:

- Co-location of EPS line, staffed by MACH nurses and midwives, with CAIT clinics at Belconnen, Lanyon, and Ngunnawal. This will enable face to face, same-day MACH consults for parents attending immunisation when required.
- CAIT staff can access EPS staff for same day MACH consults.
- MACH nurses/midwives will provide outreach group visits to connect with the community and to increase reach to vulnerable parents and carers. MACH will also provide health promotion, early intervention strategies, parenting resources and supports without an appointment via Child and Family Centre playgroups.



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Acknowledgement of Country

Canberra Health Services acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognises any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and contribution to the life of this region.

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