



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2024-2025

Ms Nicole Lawder MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),
Miss Laura Nuttall MLA

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

Asked by: Ms Leanne Castley MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Health

Reference: Uncorrected Hansard Transcript pages 13–15

In relation to: Minister briefing on NTT audit

Hearing Date: 25 July 2024

QTON lodgement date: 26 July 2024

Answer Due Date: 31 July 2024

MS CASTLEY: Minister, at what point were you aware that ACT health believed that there might have been an issue with NTT's invoices and services?

Ms Stephen-Smith: We have an ongoing conversation about audit and integrity and about the digital health record because, as you say, this is a very large project and it does involve a lot of money. There is a project board that has been overseeing—was overseeing the implementation of the digital health record. That project board was ceased following the implementation of the Digital Health Record.

Then was effectively sort of re-established to support some of the data remediation work. Mr Peffer can talk a bit more about that and I think it is—clearly, it is the role of the Director General to ensure that all of these processes are in place to undertake internal audits.

Yes, this is a big and expensive project, but Canberra Health Services is \$1.8 billion a year organisation. They spend a lot of money as well, and they have a series of internal audit process, which are not necessarily them doing the auditing because that would not be appropriate, but getting different things audited at different points in time.

It is actually a standard part of the way the public service works, but Mr Peffer might just want to talk about the—

MS CASTLEY: No, but I asked you, Minister. When did you find out that there were some concerns over the NTT contract?

...

MS CASTLEY: So when did you find out—could you explain when you found out that there was an investigation into \$140 million worth of taxpayers money being looked into for reasonableness? Can you—

Ms Stephen-Smith: I will take that question on notice to see if I was specifically advised ...

MS CASTLEY: Can anybody give me the—

Ms Stephen-Smith: I will take it on notice though. I will have a look and see if I was specifically briefed about this one.

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

The first reference to the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) internal audit of NTT invoices I can identify in briefing or information provided to me dates from mid-May 2024. This was not a specific briefing. Rather, the report was referenced in material related to funding pressures associated with the implementation of the Digital Health Record. This material stated that an internal ACTHD audit relating to NTT invoices and contract management had been finalised in April 2024 and that the Directorate was implementing recommendations from this audit.

On 17 July 2024, the Acting Director-General verbally raised with me high-level concerns related to the handling of NTT’s invoices and payments. As of the Hearing date of 25 July, I had not been briefed on the audit report, and it had not been provided to me or my office. I have subsequently been briefed on the audit report and the actions ACTHD has taken and is taking in response.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2024-2025

Signature:



Date:

6/8/24

By the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith