



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Mr Alistair Coe MLA (Chair), Ms Tara Cheyne MLA (Deputy Chair), Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA,
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA, Ms Caroline Le Couteur MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS

Asked by Mrs Dunne on 28 May 2020: Mr Rattenbury took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Hansard Transcript 28 May 2020 [PAGE #305]]

In relation to: COVID-19 specific funding

Could you give the committee a breakdown on the COVID-specific funding that has been rolled out through the hospital and mental health services that are run directly by the government, and money that has been given to the community sector. Also, in relation to that \$450,000 unallocated, have you had to call on that money since it was appropriated?

Mr Rattenbury: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

On 6 May 2020, the ACT Government's COVID-19 Mental Health Support Package (MHSP) was announced, which contained \$4.5 million in additional funding for mental health services and community organisations to address increased demand from Canberrans impacted by COVID-19. The breakdown of the MHSP is presented below:

AMOUNT	PROGRAM / INITIATIVE
\$500,000	Mental Health Foundation (MHF): Additional accommodation for people exiting acute inpatient units
\$120,000	Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Communications Campaign
\$720,000	Access Mental Health and Home Assessment Acute Response Team (HAART) Expansion
\$720,000	Police, Ambulance, Clinician Emergency Response (PACER) expansion to 7 days
\$80,000	MIEACT: Increased community mental health education and awareness
\$100,000	OzHelp: Additional support for people who have lost or may lose employment and livelihood
\$250,000	Additional support for Lifeline Canberra to meet call-in demand (includes \$100,000 announced on 20 March)
\$135,000	Menslink: Increased counselling for boys and young men (includes \$80,000 previously announced)
\$300,000	Additional investment in Detention Exit Community Outreach (DECO)
\$450,000	Funding for further initiatives in mental health sector as required

\$200,000	The Way Back Support Service: Additional investment for people who have attempted suicide or are experiencing suicidal crisis
\$250,000	Commissioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander targeted mental health program
\$100,000	Grief Counselling Services: Supporting people experiencing bereavement during COVID-19
\$341,843	Canberra Safe Haven Cafés: Supporting Social Connection
\$100,000	Perinatal Wellbeing Centre: Addressing increased demand for post and antenatal depression support (includes \$55,00 previously announced)
\$50,000	A Gender Agenda: Supporting shift to online activities
\$50,000	AIDS Action Council: Supporting shift to online telehealth and tele counselling services
\$10,000	Canberra Institute of Technology - MH Consumer Scholarship Scheme: Support for online access
\$10,000	Marymead Child Family Centre: Support for online services

Of the \$4.5 million above, \$1.9 million will help to expand Canberra Health Services (CHS) programs, including:

- \$720,000 to expand the operating capacities of the Access Mental Health and the Home Assessment Acute Response Teams;
- \$720,000 to expand the operation of the Police, Ambulance, Clinician Emergency Response (PACER) program to 7 days a week; and
- \$500,000, to work in partnership with the Mental Health Foundation, to establish a temporary accommodation program for people exiting acute inpatient units who do not have safe and stable accommodation to exit into.

\$2.55 million of the MHSP is being provided to community mental health organisations to support their existing services and developing demands. As part of this, the MHSP includes \$450,000 for innovative mental health programs that address emerging needs within the community, resulting from COVID-19. This money has not yet been drawn on since the MHSP was announced although, as part of this funding, the \$350,000 Mental Health and Wellbeing Innovation Grants Program (MHWIGP) was announced on 29 June 2020.

The MHWIGP is seeking applications from organisations, groups and individuals with innovative and effective ideas for programs, resources and tools that focus on community recovery, building resilience, tackling loneliness and creating meaningful social connections to support the ACT community in response to the impacts of COVID-19.

The MHWIGP is divided into two distinct grant streams to support initiatives of up to 12 months in duration. These streams are:

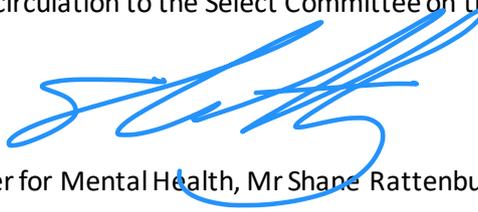
- an Organisation Grants Stream, which has a total pool of \$300,000 available for eligible applicants that have the capacity and ability to reach larger numbers of people in the ACT community, to apply for grants between \$10,000 and \$75,000; and

- a Community Grants Stream, which has a total pool of \$50,000 available for individuals, community groups and networks to apply for grants under \$10,000 to deliver programs and activities for more localised groups such as neighbourhoods, local communities or groups that have common interests.

In addition to the MHWIGP, the remaining \$100,000 of the innovative mental health funding is reserved to enable Government to respond to any future developments or proposals to address new and emerging needs as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses. This will enable the ACT Government to respond quickly to any needs emerging during recovery, in relation to further outbreaks or waves of COVID-19 or other impacts on the ACT community that cannot currently be predicted.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on the COVID-19 pandemic response

Signature:



Date: 15/8/20

By the Minister for Mental Health, Mr Shane Rattenbury

MRS DUNNE: I would like to get a feeling for where mental health in the ACT has created its own new programs in response to COVID and how it sees those programs evolving as we start to emerge from the lockdown phase.

Mr Rattenbury: I think it would be fair to say that we have not sought to create new programs at this time, partly because of the speed with which the adjustments were made for the pandemic. That is certainly the focus of both existing efforts, but then the additional money that is going to be put in through the mental health support package is really targeted towards organisations, both internally and externally, that are already operating, to enable them to either adjust their program delivery or to increase that capacity or to simply deal with the additional pressures coming on.

I am happy to go into some of the details of the package, if you like. However, we are also cognisant that, as has been the nature of the discussion today, there are new issues emerging and there may be new ideas on how to deal with it. One of the features of the funding package that we put together was an allocation of \$400,000—sorry, \$450,000—essentially unallocated, to leave some space either for things that needed to be funded that we had not perceived coming through or for organisations to come forward with new propositions as particular COVID-related problems are identified.

MRS DUNNE: Could you, perhaps on notice, minister, give the committee a breakdown on the COVID-specific funding that has been rolled out through the hospital and mental health services that are run directly by the government, and money that has been given to the community sector. Also, in relation to that \$450,000 unallocated, have you had to call on that money since it was appropriated?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. The breakdown is spelled out in the press release. We will provide that to you on notice, but it is spelled out line by line where the money is going, by name of organisation or program. In terms of the innovation fund, as I will call it, Dr Moore is in charge of that and she can speak to your second question right now if you like.

Dr Moore: We have just put together the criteria for accessing the fund and we hope to have that to the minister for his advice by Tuesday, Monday being a public holiday.