



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

QoN No. 04

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

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021
QUESTION ON NOTICE

Leanne Castley MLA: To ask the Minister for Mental Health

Mental Health, Canberra Health Services Annual Report 2020-21, Mental Health, Justice Health and Drug and Alcohol Services

In relation to: The Annual Report states that, in 2021-22, MHJHADS will “*increase acute capacity to meet demand for mental health services.*”

1. How will acute capacity be increased?

Topic Two – New Mental Health Unit, 12B

The Report states that MHJHADS will “open the Mental Health Unit, 12B” which will be a 10- bed acute health inpatient facility for people with moderate to severe mental illness.

1. Is 12B open AND fully operational?
2. How much has it cost? What is the difference between this new Mental Health Unit and the Adult Mental Health Unit at the hospital?

Topic Three – Adolescent Mental Health Unit.

I cannot find any reference in the Annual Report to the new Adolescent Mental Health Unit.

1. What is happening with the Adolescent Mental Health Unit?
2. When will it be established?

Topic Four – Eating disorders

The Report refers to introducing “new innovative services for people with eating disorders” (STRIDE program – Short-term Recovery Intervention for Disordered Eating Program and a Parenting Group).

1. What is happening with the residential facility, funded with \$13.5 million by the Federal Government?

NB: A Canberra Times article (November 17, 2021) said a “design tender will open today” and “the design process will scope whether the Coombs site is suitable for the facility.”

2. When will this design and consultation process end?
3. When will the residential facility open?
4. Why are there no inpatient services in the ACT for people living with eating disorders?
5. Why is there only one public specialist outpatient treatment option? What is that?
6. What is the waiting list for specialist services?
7. I have read that people needing treatment go interstate – do we have figures? Why haven't we properly addressed this issue?
8. I have read there is a shortage of psychiatrists in the ACT who specialise in eating disorders and many have closed their books to new patients – is that true?

Emma Davidson: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. How will acute capacity be increased?
 - In March 2021, Canberra Health Services (CHS) commenced the Adolescent Intensive Home Treatment Team (AIHTT) which provides short term follow up/review post hospital discharge for young people not engaged with another Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.
 - In April 2022, CHS will launch of the Adolescent Acute Day Program. The program provides an eight-week program for eight young people at a time post hospital discharge.
 - The opening of Ward 12B has provided additional 10 low dependency beds.
 - Internal works to create the capacity for the existing 10 High Dependency Unit (HDU) beds to flex up to 18 beds as required, is nearing completion. Note, this does not increase the actual bed number but creates additional capacity to care for HDU patients if required.
 - The Territory Wide Mental Health Bed Access Coordinator role was expanded to include weekends. This assists in supporting timely admission to mental health inpatient units over the weekend.
 - In addition to the 24/7 Mental Health Consultation Liaison Service in the Emergency Department, has expanded to the general wards from five days per week, business hours to include weekends and three evenings.
 - The Home Assessment Acute Response Team (HAART) Intensive Home Treatment (IHT) service has been expanded to the Calvary Adult Mental Health Inpatient Unit ('Acacia'). The Intensive Home Treatment service provides intensive and high frequency contact with consumers in the community to support transition and earlier discharge from hospital.

Topic Two – New Mental Health Unit, 12B

1. Yes, Ward 12B is fully operational and accepted its first patients on 21 September 2021.

The current construction cost is \$7.3 million. The labour and operating costs is \$2.1 million

2. Ward 12B is a 10-bed Low Dependency Mental Health Unit located on the Canberra Hospital site. Ward 12B provides voluntary and involuntary psychiatric care and treatment for people with a mental health illness who require inpatient care with a lower risk of behavioural

disturbance, vulnerability, or other issues than persons requiring the more restrictive environment of AMHU High Dependency Unit.

Topic Three – Adolescent Mental Health Unit.

1. Construction has commenced on the Adolescent Mental Health Unit as part of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children Expansion project.
2. Construction is targeted to be completed in June 2023.

Topic Four – Eating disorders

1.
 - In June 2020 the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, signed an agreement with the Commonwealth that provides the ACT Government with \$13.5 million in funding over three years to build a residential facility for persons with eating disorders (the Centre). The first funding instalment for the Centre was provided by the Commonwealth to the ACT in the 2021-22 financial year.
 - On 17 November 2021 Major Projects Canberra (MPC) issued a tender to engage a consultant to prepare a concept design for the Centre. This consultancy will produce a high-level overview of the look, feel and overall design of the building.
 - On 20 February 2022 it was announced that Collard Clarke Jackson Canberra Pty Ltd were awarded the design tender, with this work now currently underway.
2.
 - The Centre design will be developed in consultation with the health sector, people with eating disorders, their families, carers and the local community to ensure the needs of those who will be engaging with the service are appropriately supported.
 - The community is expected to be consulted on the designs in the first half of 2022 and will continue to be consulted as work progresses on the Centre.
 - Following the completion of construction at the end of 2023, it is expected the Centre will be operational in 2024.
3.
 - People with an eating disorder can present to the Emergency Department at Canberra Hospital for Calvary Public Hospital Bruce for treatment as required.
 - Inpatient weight stabilisation is available at the Canberra Hospital and Calvary Hospital. For people aged 16 years or under, inpatient management is in the Paediatric ward. For people over 16, inpatient management at the Canberra Hospital is in the Adult General Medicine Ward.
 - If medically stable, patients can be admitted to Calvary Public Hospital Mental Health Acacia or the Adult Mental Health Unit at the Canberra Hospital. This is mainly for treatment of acute psychiatric and suicidality risk, rather than access to an eating disorder specific program.

4.

- The current specialist outpatient treatment option is the Eating Disorders Program (EDP). EDP is a community-based therapy service that provides assessment and treatment for people living in the ACT with an eating disorder such as bulimia nervosa, anorexia nervosa or binge eating disorder. EDP provide evidence based psychological treatment options such as Maudsley Family Based Therapy (FBT) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) as indicated. More information can be found at: [Eating Disorders Program | Health \(act.gov.au\)](https://www.health.act.gov.au/eating-disorders-program)
- The ACT now also has another public specialist option for those with an eating disorder. The Eating Disorders Clinical Hub was launched on 25 January 2022 to improve coordination of resources, services, and expertise across the ACT for people experiencing or impacted by eating disorders. The Clinical Hub ensures better access to care by connecting people with services that best support their individual needs and circumstances. Once a referral is received, the Hub undertakes a detailed intake, triage, and assessment process to determine the best care pathway.
- During its establishment phase in 2021, the Clinical Hub also undertook considerable work to address the significant waiting list experienced by the EDP. This was done via the implementation of two new service initiatives - the STRIDE Program and Parenting Groups. In addition the Clinical Hub dietician also offers nutritional assessments to eligible clients. These new service offerings were initiatives of the Clinical Hub.
- The ACT Government committed \$2.2 million under the 2019-20 Budget to increase the capacity and range of eating disorder services available in the ACT. This commitment includes funding for the Eating Disorders Specialist Clinical Hub, a community-based support early intervention service and the development of the Territory-wide model of care for eating disorders. This is in addition to the Commonwealth's \$13.5 million to establish the Eating Disorders Residential Treatment Centre. All of this work is managed under the Expanding Public Health Services for Eating Disorders (EPHSED) in the Territory project, and once completed will see specialist outpatient treatment options in the Territory further expanded.

5.

- The waiting times for CAMHS Eating Disorders Services are currently as follows:
 - Initial phone assessment is two weeks
 - Single Session Intervention is two weeks
 - STRIDE is 4 to 6 weeks
 - Parent Group for Family based therapy is two to three weeks (
- Access to evidence-based eating disorders therapy is 12 months

6.

- The ACT does not have data on patients who access care interstate for their eating disorder.
- The ACT Government is committed to improving eating disorder services in the ACT across the full spectrum of care, so that we can provide the best treatment and care for people with eating disorders when they need it, where they need it. Eating disorders are complex and multi-causal disorders that necessitate flexible, individualised care solutions that can be provided across a range of settings and in a coordinated way that reflects best available evidence. The EPHSED Project, which includes funding by both the ACT Government and the Commonwealth, will assist in addressing demand and provide additional treatment options for eating disorder services in the ACT.

7.

- Public psychiatrists do not close their books. In most instances, the wait time to see a Child Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) psychiatrist is much shorter than for a private psychiatrist.
- I am unable to comment on private psychiatrist's books.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Signature: *Emma Davidson*

Date: 16 March 2022

By the Minister for Mental Health, Emma Davidson