



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

## FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2024-2045

Ms Nichole Lawder MLA (Chair) Ms Suzane Orr MLA (Deputy Chair) Miss  
Laura Nuttall MLA (Member)

### ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

#### Estimates Hearing

#### Thursday, 25 July 2024

Asked by: Ms Leanne Castley MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Health

Reference: Uncorrected Hansard Transcript Pages 29-30

In relation to: Wellbeing funding breakdown

Hearing Date: 25 July 2024

QTON lodgement date: 26 July 2024

Answer Due Date: 31 July 2024

**MS CASTLEY:** Sure. Just on the—because we chatted about it last—the AMA—the \$85 million wellbeing, you said that there is longer contracts now, they have gone from two years to three years. Is that a bonus? I know other jurisdictions are giving like \$40,000. Is that it or is just that they get a longer contract?

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** No, it is more about the job security. And maybe Dr Smallbane can talk about how that is being implemented.

**Dr Smallbane:** So my understanding, and I have to say I was new to this and so I was not involved in the beginning and the inception of putting this process in place, and I really, really welcome it, it has been fantastic, that funding is for the chief wellness officer, the psychologist, the international medical graduates, senior doctor who is responsible for helping out international medical graduates when they arrive to culturally assimilate with our healthcare system. And there are three or four new part time positions involved in that funding, that funding is over several years.

The longer contracts themselves are an initiative where we would be trying to recruit to those positions anyway every single year. But we are now doing is saying, we want you to stay. We want to make your life better. And we want to give you some job security so that you can invest in the ACT and get a loan and buy a house and all the things that you need to do, you need proper security for.

We are offering that to our juniors for much longer terms. It used to be just one year rolling contracts where you applied for your job every year. Now we are saying, we will employ you for four years. You are welcome to leave. We do not want them to. It is not like they are stuck with us for four years. But we offer them the security from our side.

**MS CASTLEY:** And so, of the \$8.5 million, how much is for international medical graduates, did you say? Is that a training program or is that the cost to bring them here?

**Dr Smallbane:** That is purely the cost to employ people to help train them and to set up a training program specific for international medical graduates. They now make up 30 per cent of our junior medical workforce.

**MS CASTLEY:** Yes. Can you give me the breakdown of those costs? So the \$8.5 million. So the psychiatrist, the training for the junior medical officers—

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** Yes.

**MS CASTLEY:** —of that \$8.5?

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** We will take that on notice—

**MS CASTLEY:** Yes.

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** We will have had that from last year's budget—

**Dr Smallbane:** Yes.

**MS CASTLEY:** Yes, great.

**Ms Stephen-Smith:** So we will be able to provide that.

**MS CASTLEY:** Lovely, thank you.

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

The breakdown for the \$8.574 million 2023-24 Budget health portfolio initiative "*Supporting our health workforce – Deliver better support for our Junior Medical Officers*" is:

1. \$4.878 million to increase the contracts offered to graduating doctors from two years to three years, and create senior house positions to assist junior medical officers in bridging the transition from interns/residents to building a career locally;
2. \$2.259 million for increasing pastoral care and other support measures for young doctors; and
3. \$1.437 million for training, development and wellbeing coordination, and longitudinal measurements of junior medical officers' wellbeing.

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

Signature:



Date:

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By Rachel Stephen-Smith, Minister for Health