



Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–2024

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Ms Chiaka Barry MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Health

Reference: Health

Hearing: 20 February 2025

In relation to: Weekly Respiratory Illness Report

Question received: 24 February 2025

Answer Due: 3 March 2025

I note that publication of respiratory illness data, including the Weekly Respiratory Illness Report and the COVID-19 data tile, ceased on Friday 24 January 2025, but will recommence in the autumn/winter months.

I presume that report is automated, why was it necessary to cease publication of this important public health messaging?

MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The ACT Government has transitioned the reporting and management of COVID-19 to a manner that is similar to other notifiable respiratory diseases, in line with the nation approach of managing COVID-19 more sustainably in the post-pandemic phase.

ACT data for COVID-19, RSV and influenza is available from the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS). The NNDSS data is timely, with ACT data updated every weekday and is available at: [National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System \(NNDSS\) data visualisation tool | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care](#).

The ACT Health Directorate's public reporting of notifiable respiratory illnesses is seasonal. This is based on the epidemiology of respiratory viruses, which are known to increase during the autumn/winter months.

The preparation of reports takes staffing resources and is not automated. As a smaller jurisdiction, the ACT prioritises resources towards highest value activities. The Chief Health Officer has advised that there is limited value to the community from preparing these reports during the inter-seasonal period, when notifications are low, allowing resources to be reprioritised during these periods.

The ACT Health Directorate will recommence reporting of respiratory illness data in the cooler months of the year when case numbers start to increase.

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The ACT Health Directorate closely monitors the incidence of all notifiable respiratory illnesses in the ACT, including COVID-19. If there is a change in the risk to the community at any time of the year, public messaging will be issued with relevant information and advice.

Rises and falls in COVID-19 transmission in the community are to be expected, as is the case with other viruses, and it is therefore important for people to take personal steps to protect themselves.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. Stephen-Smith', written over a horizontal line.

Date:

3 / 3 / 25

By the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith