



Inquiry into the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Ms Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Health

Reference: HCSD

Hearing: 5 March 2026

In relation to: Preventative health care

Question received: 11 March 2026

Answer Due: 23 March 2026

1. Can you advise how much ACT Government spends each year on upstream preventative health care versus downstream acute care health care?
2. Can you list which areas of preventative health care ACT Government is investing in including food relief and healthy food, alcohol and drug services, loneliness and social isolation and any other areas of preventative health care?

Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. ACT Government funds many programs, initiatives and organisations that address the social determinants of health such as food relief, loneliness and secure housing. Broader preventive health actions are delivered across a number of areas of the ACTPS and it is not possible to fully account for these with a single expenditure figure.

The Health portfolio is responsible for Preventive Health initiatives that include action taken to keep people healthy and well, and prevent or avoid risk of poor health, illness, injury and early death. The ACT reported to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare the following levels of preventive health expenditure for the period 2019-20 to 2023-24:

Year	Preventative Health Expenditure (\$m)
2019-20	79
2020-21	96
2021-22	179
2022-23	154
2023-24	101

2. The preventive health funding above incorporates communicable disease control, health promotion, immunisation, environmental health, food safety, breast and bowel cancer screening, and prevention of hazardous and harmful drug use. The increases in 2020 to 2023 are largely attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The *Healthy Canberra: ACT Preventive Health Plan (2020-2025)* (the Plan) is a whole of government plan that aims to reduce the prevalence of chronic disease in the ACT and support good health at all stages of life. The Plan is being implemented through two consecutive 3-year action plans (2020-2022 and 2023-2025). The plan has five priority areas:

- supporting children and families
- enabling active living
- increasing healthy eating
- reducing risky behaviours, including smoking, risky alcohol consumption and the transmission of sexually transmissible infections and bloodborne viruses
- promoting healthy ageing.

A progress report on actions in the Plan from January 2023 to June 2024 was released in April 2025. Delivery of the Plan is supported by a range of activities, including the Healthy Canberra Grants program which provides funding for community organisations to deliver community-based activities that create supportive environments to improve the health of Canberrans, with a focus on preventing chronic disease.

Other activities that support prevention of poor health include (but are not limited to):

- programs aimed at altering the ACT environment to promote the health of the population, such as ensuring access to green spaces;
- preventive and health promotion programs, and settings-based behaviour change interventions, such as immunisation, and school-based promotion programs;
- monitoring and responding to communicable disease threats;
- harm minimisation programs, including for smoking, alcohol, other drug and sexually transmissible infection; and
- prevention of public health risks through regulation, such as food and medication safety.

Budget within the ACTPS is generally allocated by organisational structure, unless it relates to a specific initiative or large-scale project. Some activities, such as immunisation and screening are partially or fully funded under Commonwealth agreements. As budget is not isolated for most preventive health activities, it is not possible to provide an exact figure on all preventive health activities undertaken across different parts of the ACTPS.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on the Fiscal Sustainability of the ACT

Signature:



Date:

15 / 4 / 26

By the Minister for Health, Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith