



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Vicki Dunne MLA (Chair), Tara Cheyne MLA (Deputy Chair)
Nicole Lawder MLA, Bec Cody MLA

Inquiry into the Appropriation Bill 2019-2020 (No 2)

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

The Committee asks ministers to respond within 5 working days of receiving the QoNs, where Day One is the first working day after receipt.

Mrs Vicki Dunne MLA: To ask the Minister for Health

In relation to: Staff and Trainee Doctor Surveys

1. Why did only 29 per cent of Canberra Health Services staff have confidence in its management and leadership, including the health and mental health ministers?
2. Will you publish: (a) supporting material for the survey of Canberra Health Services; and (b) the results for previous staff surveys, and if no, why?
3. Why did only 31 per cent of Canberra Health Services staff have confidence in the management and leadership, including ministers, to introduce reforms that are well planned, and patient-focussed?
4. What was the nature of comments from staff about: (a) trust in management and leadership; (b) complaints handling; and (c) introduction of reforms?
5. Do the results of the staff survey reflect concerns about the decision to separate ACT Health and Canberra Health Services?
6. What other factors contributed to the poor results in the survey, including, but not limited to, poor workplace culture?
7. Is management and leadership one of the areas identified by the Reid Report as being a primary causal factor in poor workplace culture?
8. Why did the ACT rank as the worst jurisdiction in the country in the survey of trainee doctors?
9. Which areas of the Canberra Health Services have the worst problems when it comes to treatment of trainee doctors?
10. Why is the Government being so secretive when it comes to revealing problems with workplace culture in areas of Canberra Health Services?
11. What evidence is there that staff culture is improving given the poor results in the staff survey and trainee doctor survey?

12. Are reforms to health culture "stuck in the health bureaucracy" as the head of the ACT AMA claimed recently in the media?

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

1. The 29 per cent result rate was in response to a question related to the Executive Management Team and not more broadly leadership and management. The question did not specifically ask if staff had confidence in this cohort. While this percentage may seem low, it is a five per cent improvement since the 2015 survey and is not significantly lower than Best Practice Australia's – our survey provider – benchmarking partners. The result reflects a common pattern in culture surveys conducted in a large and complex healthcare environment like Canberra Health Services (CHS) where staff may be unfamiliar with their Divisional Executive.
2. (a) CHS published and distributed across the organisation the 'Workplace Culture Survey – Results 2019' booklet. The booklet has been well received and provided staff with a summary of the survey results. An overview of the results will be tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly.

(b) The detailed results from previous surveys are not made public for a number of reasons:
 - assurances made to staff about the confidentiality of their responses and the risk of undermining staff confidence and participation in future surveys;
 - the commercial value and intellectual property of Best Practice Australia (BPA) as the survey provider which could be compromised; and
 - the nature of the reports which are designed for use as working documents by staff, executives and managers within the organisation.
3. 31 per cent of staff agreed that CHS introduces change that is well-planned, and client focussed. While 31 per cent may seem low, it is a 4.5 per cent improvement on the 2015 survey and benchmarks near and above the norm when compared to BPA benchmarking partners. The 4.5 per cent improvement reflects the work done by CHS to consult and involve staff in change processes.
4. CHS staff provided narrative comments in the survey on the understanding their survey responses would be kept private and confidential. It is therefore inappropriate to share staff comments.
5. The survey results reflect CHS is heading in the right direction to improve workplace culture and show increased staff engagement. CHS reported an improvement from a culture of reaction and blame in previous ACT Health surveys to a culture of consolidation, as did the ACT Health Directorate survey. Compared to the last survey, 51 questions rated statistically better, 19 questions rated statistically equal and only six questions rated statistically worse. The significantly higher number of questions rated better, combined with being in a culture of consolidation for the first time, is an indicator CHS is moving in a positive direction to improve workplace culture.
6. Considering the overall improvement in results from 2015 are the best result in the history of surveys, CHS does not see this result as 'poor'. There are a number of positives from the culture survey – CHS had a 57 per cent response rate, the highest rate since the surveys began in 2005. CHS is in a culture of consolidation, an improvement from the 2015 survey when ACT Health was in a culture of reaction, and the vast majority of the questions rated statistically better than the 2015 survey. The CHS Culture Survey only measures culture.
7. The Independent Review into the Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services (the Review) identified leadership and management as contributors to workplace culture.

The Final Report: Independent Review into the Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services did not identify management and leadership as a primary causal factor in poor workplace culture.

8. CHS is unable to definitively answer the question. Further analysis of the survey is underway to better understand our Junior medical staff concerns.
9. Respondents of the survey were not asked to identify where they currently worked, therefore CHS is not able to answer this question.
10. CHS has been transparent with staff on revealing the results of the 2019 Workplace Culture Survey. The CHS Chief Executive Officer conducted all staff forums in February 2020 to inform staff of the results and included what is working well and the areas requiring improvement. A booklet was published and distributed to staff on the survey results which included what is working well, what could be better, what you asked for and what is going to be done. The Executive Management team are underway in presenting the Divisional results to all staff. The survey results will be used to develop Divisional action plans.
11. CHS had a 57 per cent response rate, the highest rate since the surveys began in 2005. CHS is in a culture of consolidation, an improvement from the 2015 survey when ACT Health was in a culture of reaction, and the vast majority of the questions rated statistically better than the 2015 survey. These are all evidence culture is improving.

Since 2005, ACT Health has been investing in whole-of-organisation workplace culture surveys and associated culture improvement activities. Surveys have been conducted in 2005, 2007, 2009, 2012, 2015 and now in 2019 and have provided information to the organisation to inform both organisational level initiatives and action planning at the division, branch and team-based levels. Important points to note:

- In Canberra Health Services (CHS), 4162 staff responded to the 2019 Culture Survey, which equates to a response rate of 57 per cent. In the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD), 480 employees responded to the ACTHD climate survey, which equates to a response rate of 82 per cent. This is the highest response rate for both organisations since staff surveys were initiated in 2005.
- For the first time, both CHS and ACTHD are in a culture of Consolidation, which is an improvement from a culture of Reaction and Blame in previous surveys. A culture of Consolidation signifies the organisation is in a state of transition and moving in a positive direction at this time.
- In CHS, since the last survey in 2015, 51 questions rated statistically better than the last survey, 19 questions rated statistically equal to the last survey and only six questions rated statistically worse than the last survey. The significantly higher number of questions rated statistically better is another indicator CHS is moving in a positive direction to improve workplace culture.
- CHS has prioritised and continues to prioritise the safety of our staff with significant work already undertaken to minimise the risk of occupational violence. The CHS Occupational Violence Strategy has been developed and was launched on April 1 this year.

The trainee doctor survey results have been noted. There is acknowledgement that there is opportunity for further work in this area. There are a range of initiatives that will be implemented that will address some of the key findings from the trainee doctor survey.

12. There are a range of reforms underway and has been reported on a bi-monthly basis at the Culture Review Oversight Group. Two recommendations from the Review have been completed.

A substantial amount of foundational work is underway, and we are ensuring that the best evidence is considered before we develop initiatives to ensure we have considered the factors that are likely to support successful implementation.

There is acknowledgement that cultural and organisational reform takes time, and that the success of reform is reliant upon broad, quality engagement across the ACT public health system. The success of the engagement is also reliant upon stakeholders committing to strong partnerships in developing solutions that are fit for purpose, flexible and can evolve over time. There are opportunities for stakeholders to engage and participate in collaborative partnerships and shaping of initiatives.

The first year of the Culture Review Implementation has been focussed on the initiation stage which has involved planning and investing in progressing a range of the recommendations from the Final Report: Independent Review into the Workplace Culture within ACT Public Health Services. Progress is underway against 19 of the 20 recommendations, as the training and mentoring package for executive leadership outlined in recommendation 13 will flow on from work on a number of other recommendations.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Signature:



Date: 1/4/20

By the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA