



Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021-2022

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by **MS LEANNE CASTLEY MLA:**

Reference: Hearing on 1 November 2022, Annual Report of CHS

In relation to: CHS Annual Report 2021-22 Page 22

- 1) In hearings on the 1/11/22 it was mentioned that Nurse Practitioners had been leaving the ACT, how many (a) have left the ACT since 2020 (b) have been recruited?
 - a) What reason are nurse practitioners leaving the ACT?
- 2) In August 2022 estimates you mentioned a training program to assist aspiring nurse practitioners, how many nurses have signed up for that training
 - a) what is the cost of the program?
 - b) What is the demand from nurses to take this training?
 - c) How many positions are available for nurses?
- 3) One of the recommendations from the 2017 and 2021 review into Nurse Practitioners in the ACT is to remove barriers in current legislation and policy. Have you completed this recommendation and if not, what legislation still needs to be amended?
 - a) What legislation have you amended?

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

- 1) Six Nurse Practitioners have left the Walk-in Centres and eight Nurse Practitioners have been recruited since 2020. The reasons for leaving include retirement, employment in non-direct patient facing roles and family relocations.
- 2)
 - a) There is no formal cost to Canberra Health Services (CHS) for nurses seeking formal qualifications as a Nurse Practitioner. Rather, Registered Nurses must complete a Master of Nurse Practitioner university qualification which is supported by CHS with indirect costs for backfill and leave cover.

Nurses can access professional development support with Study Assistance (allowing up to 60 hours per semester of paid study time) and sabbatical leave for up to six weeks full time paid study leave. Staff are eligible to apply for scholarship programs for university fee support. The Nurse Practitioner qualification requires a Nurse Practitioner clinical mentor,

who undertakes direct supervision and education. This is provided from within the Walk-in Centre team.

- b) Walk-in Centres currently have six Advance Practice Nurses working towards Nurse Practitioner qualifications.
 - c) A further seven, or 10 per cent, of Advanced Practice Nurses employed in the Walk-in Centres have expressed an interest in completing this training model.
- 4) The 2017 Review into Nurse Practitioners recommended the repeal of regulations relating to the governance of Nurse Practitioners to align the governance arrangements in the ACT in accordance with other regulated health professionals that are the responsibility of employers. In response to this recommendation, the *Health Regulation 2004* was repealed in November 2018 and the *Health Act 1993* (the Act) was amended in 2019 to include the term 'nurse practitioner' in Part 5 of the Act to formalise clinical governance requirements.

The 2021 Review of Nurse Practitioners, and options for policy and legislative amendments, are currently being considered.

- a) *Health Regulation 2004*
Health Act 1993

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Signature:



Date:

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By the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA