



STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING
Mr James Milligan MLA (Chair), Mr Michael Petterson MLA (Deputy
CHAIR)

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022–2023
Question on Notice (Committee)

Asked by: **MRS ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA**

Addressed to: Minister for Health

Reference: HCW, Canberra Health Services Annual Report 2022-2023, page 67

Hearing Date: 16/11/2023

In relation to: Therapy Dogs

Question Lodgement Date: 21/11/2023

- 1) Are the Paws the Pressure Therapy dogs primarily used for the benefit of staff or visitors/patients at the hospital?
- 2) How much does the ACT Government pay Paws the Pressure for the use of their dogs?
- 3) Can the Minister list the seven work areas the dogs visited?
 - a. How many dogs were brought to each work area?
- 4) Have there been any incidents where the dogs had to be unexpectedly withdrawn from the places they were visiting?
- 5) Have there been any incidents where the dogs attacked anyone?
- 6) Can the Minister attach the business case that supported the decision to fund the dog program?
- 7) Can the Minister attach any feedback they have received from staff, visitors or patients about the dog program?
- 8) Are any ACT government staff trained in dealing with therapy dogs? If so, how many and how much is funding for training?
- 9) Is it strictly Paws the Pressure therapy workers that deals with patients and their dogs?

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

- 1) The Paws the Pressure Therapy dog program is funded by Canberra Hospital Foundation, to support Canberra Health Services (CHS) staff members with wellbeing support.
- 2) The ACT Government does not pay for Paws the Pressure. This program is funded and administered by the Canberra Hospital Foundation which receives donations from the community.
- 3) The areas visited by the Therapy Dogs were:
 - Building 15, Canberra Hospital (Allied Health Staff)
 - Building 11, Women Youth & Children's staff
 - Building 1 Tower Block (this was a mixed staff booking, including Wards people and staff from the Division of Surgery and Division of Medicine)
 - Building 10, Pathology Staff
 - 9B, Neurosurgery Staff

For each visit, 3 to 5 therapy dogs attend.

- 4) No.
- 5) No.
- 6) No. Canberra Hospital Foundation is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission. It is a separate entity to Canberra Health Services.
- 7) Canberra Health Services has not received any formal feedback from staff on the dog program.
- 8) Canberra Health Services (CHS) can only provide information on any CHS employees training in dealing with therapy dogs. Canberra Health Services does not offer any training to staff relating to the handling of therapy dogs.
- 9) The Paws the Pressure program is for staff only. Paws the Pressure visits are not conducted in patient areas and only engage with CHS staff. All animals are handled by Paws the Pressure handlers.

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

Signature:



Date:

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By the Minister for Health, Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA