



Inquiry into endometriosis and other pelvic pain conditions

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Mr Thomas Emerson MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Health

In relation to: Deep Infiltrating Endometriosis Ultrasounds

Ms Stephen-Smith took on notice the following question(s):

THE CHAIR: Yes, the DIE scans.

Dr Van Diemen: We do not offer it in the Canberra Health system, primarily because the skill set for the sonographers to do the scan is incredibly complex, and there are additional skills that they need. We cannot perform them. The other part of it is reporting on them, and we do not have the expertise to report on them at the moment.

Certainly, with the people who would have the qualifications—there are some specialty qualifications within gynaecology—their skills are being utilised within the maternal fetal medicine service.

We do not have the capability to either increase the training for the sonographers or provide staff that have the appropriate qualifications to be able to read the scans. In Canberra, there is a private option available to people. In New South Wales, there is a public option available to people at one of the tertiary referral centres. I might be wrong, but I think it is the Royal Women's. We do not as yet have an established pathway to refer patients there, and it is replicated in other jurisdictions, where they might have a subspecialty centre that does DIEs in the public system, and the waitlists are incredibly long for those, so they are not able to accept referrals outside the area.

THE CHAIR: Do you have the technology to do it? That was the other barrier that was mentioned earlier. Is additional equipment required to perform those specific tests?

Dr Van Diemen: Not that I am aware of. I will check and get back to you.

Ms Stephen-Smith: We will take that on notice.

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

Currently, there is no dedicated public pathway in the ACT for undertaking Deep Infiltrating Endometriosis (DIE) ultrasound assessments. These scans are highly specialised and require advanced gynaecological ultrasound expertise both to perform the scans and to report the scans, which is not presently established within ACT public medical imaging.

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Specific ultrasound equipment and probes tailored to advanced transvaginal imaging, are required. Canberra Health Services (CHS) currently has ultrasound equipment appropriate to perform these examinations.

However, the limitation to performing DIE scans is a result of current and available workforce and skills. Subspecialist training and experience for sonographers, beyond standard practice, is required to be competent to perform DIE scans.

Subspecialist medical qualifications, in the form of a Certificate of Gynae Ultrasound (COGU), is required to interpret and report DIE scans. CHS currently has limited access to a visiting COGU-qualified specialist, however this resource is fully allocated to high-demand fetal imaging services. As a result, there is no available capacity within existing services to extend this expertise to DIE-focused gynaecological scans.

Additional funding alone would not guarantee establishment of a sustainable public pathway, given the subspecialist skills required, both medical and radiological, and the significant shortage of those skills not just in the ACT, but in Australia.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Social Policy

Signature:



Date:

7/6/26

By the Minister for Health, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA