

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA

Minister for Health

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Finance

Minister for the Public Service

Member for Kurrajong

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Questions on Notice Paper No 5

11 APRIL 2025

Question No. 314

MR SHANE RATTENBURY MLA: To ask the Minister for Health

- 1) Given that on 4 February, a question taken on notice asked "Minister, what steps have you taken to make available data on how many emergency room presentations arise from dental issues, given that the inquiry into annual and financial reports 2022-23 recommended that the ACT government report this data regularly?" and the response outlined this data was not available on the dashboard as "The Directorate has developed a draft methodology for identifying patients presenting to emergency departments with a dental related principal diagnosis", why is there a need for the Directorate to draft methodology, given that preventable hospitalisations for dental conditions are already reported to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).
- 2) Will this methodology be the same as the methodology used for data submitted to the AIHW; if not, what is the rationale for the new methodology, and how does it differ.
- 3) Given the response outlines that the Directorate needs to "Undertake an assessment of the power of the metric to identify dental presentations in light of the limitations of using administrative data to report on performance...", when will the assessment be completed.
- 4) What are the current limitations of using administrative data to report on "potentially preventable dental admissions" and all other data metrics that are drawn from administrative data.
- 5) If the methodology will be the same as the methodology used for data submitted to the AIHW, why is there a need for this additional assessment.
- 6) Will any other relevant stakeholders be consulted in this process.



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

- 1) There is a need to draft a bespoke methodology to report emergency department (ED) presentations arising from dental issues. This is because the methodology applied by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) relates to admitted patient care episodes (hospitalisations), not ED presentations.
- 2) The new metric is based on the AIHW methodology used to identify avoidable general practitioner type presentations to ED and draws on the methodology for preventable admitted patient care episodes (hospitalisations) to identify dental diagnoses and aligns these with diagnoses available in the ED data collection.
- 3) The ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) is working to include the indicator in the July 2025 release of the Health Service Data Dashboard.
- 4) Limitations arising from using administrative data to report on hospital activity and performance, include:
 - a. Data quality and accuracy – data is captured at the point of care for operational purposes, leading to potential inconsistencies that skew the results.
 - b. Lack of clinical detail – the data reflects the patient's presenting problem and may not capture clinical nuances, including underlying cause, disease severity or comorbidities.
 - c. Incomplete data capture – some activities may not be fully captured, leading to an incomplete picture.
- 5) The methodology will not be the same.
- 6) ACTHD will consult subject matter experts at Canberra Health Services on:
 - a. the diagnosis codes included in the metric; and
 - b. the caveat information to accompany the published metric.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA
Minister for Health

Date: 18 / 5 / 25

This response required 2hrs 55mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$328.36.