

Response to question on notice

Questions on Notice Paper No 8

27 June 2025

Question No. 478

MS CASTLEY MLA: To ask the Minister for Health

- 1) Will the Government consider adding rheumatology modules to nurse training in the ACT to help address demand for conditions like scleroderma, in light of its recent commitment to providing a dedicated nurse with training in Parkinson's disease.
- 2) Has the Government assessed a nurse-led model of care for rheumatology, given that, according to Scleroderma Australia, there is currently a nationwide shortage of specialists in rheumatology, estimated to be just over half of demand.

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

- 1) The curricula for undergraduate programs of study, such as a Bachelor of Nursing degree, are designed by the education provider (i.e. the relevant university) and accredited for delivery through the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC). ANMAC is the national accreditation authority for nursing and midwifery education providers in Australia.

Undergraduate programs of study for nursing are designed to provide the core knowledge, skills and competencies required through integrating sciences, research and applied evidence to think critically and inform safe clinical decision making for quality person centred nursing care.

A registered nurse wishing to further develop their clinical expertise in a specific context of practice, such as rheumatology, would appropriately gain this through professional education programs or formal post-graduate study. It is not possible, nor appropriate, to include detailed content across all sub-specialty contexts of practice into an undergraduate program of study.

The Office of the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer (OCNMO) provides study reimbursements for nurses and midwives who apply for support through the scholarship program in the Health and Community Services Directorate. The OCNMO offers support for applicants who are choosing to further their study and education in many fields associated with nursing, midwifery and health.

Canberra Health Services (CHS) does not provide any formal training modules in rheumatology for nursing staff. However, informal professional development education is provided to develop clinical knowledge relevant to these roles.

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- 2) In August 2021, CHS implemented a nurse led model of care for patients with autoimmune diseases, including the treatment of scleroderma. This model of care improves patient access and provides coordinated clinical care in response to the national shortage of rheumatology specialists. The nurse led model of care is supported by an advanced practice nurse, registered nurse and rheumatologist.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



**Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA
Health**

Date: 3 | 8 | 25

This response required 6 hrs 30 mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$563.08.