

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 1****6 DECEMBER 2024****Question No. 90****MS JO CLAY MLA:** To ask the Minister for Health

- 1) How many women and birthing people, per year, who are planning to have a public home birth live on the north side of Canberra.
- 2) How many women or birthing people are unable to access a publicly funded homebirth because there is not a midwife available.
- 3) How many midwives are there working at the Northside Hospital who would be willing to attend home births if the program was run from the Northside Hospital rather than only the Canberra hospital.

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

- 1) The ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) and Canberra Health Services (CHS) do not hold data on the number of women and birthing people planning to have a home birth specifically on the northside of Canberra. However, between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2024, there were 20 publicly funded home births completed across the ACT.
- 2) ACTHD and CHS do not hold data on women and birthing people who are unable to access their preferred birthing service. The Home Birth Service has capacity for 150 home births per year, or approximately 12 per month.
- 3) CHS does not capture this information from midwives. There is no dataset held on current workforce sentiment at North Canberra Hospital that specifically asks midwives whether they would wish to participate in a home birth service. As the Member is aware, the ACT Government



recently expanded the public home birth service that runs from Canberra Hospital to women and birthing people who live on Canberra's northside. Should a woman or birthing person need to be transferred to hospital due to a situation arising during labour at home, the midwife is able to follow the woman or birthing person to the hospital – however, I am advised that this is extremely rare in practice.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



**Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA
Minister for Health**

Date: **21/2/25**

This response required 10hrs 15mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$1257.28.