

## Response to question on notice

### Questions on Notice Paper No 14

5 December 2025

Question No. 774

**Shane Rattenbury MLA:** To ask the Minister for Health

1. What proportion of the ACT's children (aged 5-17) has been reached by government-funded preventative health programs in relation to nutrition, physical activity or oral health education in 2025.
2. How many of the programs referred to in part (1) were delivered via partnerships with community organisations or schools in the outer suburbs or low socio-economic suburbs.
3. What plans does the Government have to expand or scale up the school-based or community-based preventative programs referred to in part (2) over the next three years, including additional funding, staffing or infrastructure.

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

*Please note: The following responses relate only to specific preventive health programs funded by the relevant area of the Health and Community Services Directorate (HCSD) and Canberra Health Services' (CHS) Dental Services. Preventive health programs are also delivered directly by schools, community and sporting organisations, while ACT Government directorates support physical activity initiative such as Walk and Ride to School that are not captured below.*

1. Preventive health programs delivered in the health portfolio in 2024-25 in relation to nutrition and physical activity targeting school age children have been delivered primarily through accredited e-learning health promotion courses that provide curriculum support for teachers and Healthy Canberra Grants.

HCSD does not record the proportion of young people who access these programs, but participation is evidenced through course completions, program sessions, community engagement and program evaluation.

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### School based supports

The ACT Government continues to support ACT teachers and educators with online professional learning to develop their health promotion knowledge and support delivery of the Australia Curriculum. E-learning courses such as Food and Me, It's Your Move, and Vaping, Youth and Health are all targeted at supporting teachers of children aged five to 17 years of age.

In 2024-25, 123 people completed online professional learning courses. Over the past five years, 1267 people have completed online professional learning courses.

Families are supported to bring healthy lunches to school through a healthy lunchbox flyer made available online in 22 languages. This lunchbox flyer is distributed yearly through Kindergarten Screening Information packs. In 2026, 6,700 Kindy Screening Information Packs for parents will be distributed in February 2026 across all kindergarten settings.

### Healthy Canberra Grants (HCG)

HCG provides funding opportunities for community organisations to health improve the health of Canberrans and reduce the risk of developing chronic disease.

In 2025, active grants through HCG that supported physical activity and nutrition for children aged five to 17 included:

- a) Australian Talented Youth Project Incorporated delivering the Stellar Step Up! from October 2023 until December 2025. The program aims to support movement and body positivity, engaging young people through dance. HCSD is yet to receive information on program reach but the program has delivered more than 90 dance sessions.
- b) MARSS Australia Inc is delivering the CALD Youth Nutrition and Physical Activity program from November 2023 to June 2026. This program aims to improve the health and wellbeing of culturally diverse communities with cooking workshops, education sessions and physical activity. Forty-five school aged people participated in cooking classes and 79 engaged in physical activity as a result of the program from July 2024 to June 2025.
- c) The Uniting Church in Australia (ACT) Property Trust on behalf of Uniting Church Kippax is delivering the Kippax Active Children and Youth program from October 2023 to June 2026. This aims to improve relationships and active recreation participation levels for children and young people in the West Belconnen region. As of June 2025, 91 primary and 18 secondary school students had engaged in a component of the program called Friday Frenzy, which offers low cost after school activities (e.g. gold coin donation) during school term.

## Dental Health Education

The ACT's eligible children (aged five to 17) who have been reached by CHS Dental health education in 2025 is as follows:\*

- a) Bimberi Youth Justice Centre – 14 children and young people
- b) Mobile Dental Clinic – Ngunnawal and Bonython primary schools – 459 children
- c) Additional Needs and Multicultural Playgroups (Tuggeranong, Gungahlin and West Belconnen Child and Family Centres) – 28 children
- d) Dental Health Week sessions – Kippax – West Belconnen community (Village for Every Child initiative) – seven children
- e) CHS Dental Clinics – Oral Hygiene Instructions – 2,933 children

*\*Digital Health Record data as of 9 December 2025 for CHS Dental eligible clients only.*

2. Programs have been delivered in partnership with schools and community organisations, including in outer and lower socio-economic suburbs (including West Belconnen, Gungahlin, Tuggeranong and Woden).

Stellar Step Up! delivered by Australian Talented Youth Project Incorporated, has been delivered across Gungahlin, Tuggeranong, Woden and Belconnen regions in partnership with Duffy Primary School, Dark Carnival Philip, Harrison School, ACT Libraries, Narrabundah Early Childhood School and Substance Studio Philip who have supported the program through offering locations for activities.

The CALD Youth Nutrition and Physical Activity program is being delivered by MARSS in partnership with Dickson College.

The Kippax Active Children and Youth program, delivered by Uniting Church Kippax was targeted at lower socio-economic families within the West Belconnen region.

The online professional learning courses are available to all schools and early year settings across all education sectors.

CHS Dental health has partnerships with community organisations included ACT Corrective Services, Education Directorate and ACT public schools based on the identified low Index of Community, Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) schools, ACT Child and Family Centres (Tuggeranong, Gungahlin and West Belconnen) and Uniting Care, Kippax (Village for Every Child).

3. Future scaling or expansion of school-based or community-based preventive programs will be informed by evaluation and strategic scoping by HCSD.

The ACT Government acknowledges the importance of preventive health in the early years as well as for school aged children and their families. Currently, deliverables are guided by multiple ACT and national strategies that support Canberran's wellbeing.

Funding through HCG is time limited and for specific purposes only. The funding guidelines for each round have indicated that funding will not be renewed after the grant period and receiving a grant does not represent any commitment by the ACT Government to support recurrent funding.

The future of health promotion within schools and the broader community are being considered by HCSD with a strategic approach that supports evidence-based interventions and ensures responsiveness to community needs. This includes utilising:

- a) the evaluation of existing health promotion activities; and
- b) targeted scoping work including engagement with key stakeholders, research and data analysis of emerging health trends, jurisdictional scan and alignment with broader population health objectives.

The scoping findings are being strategically mapped against and guided by national and local preventive health strategies, ensuring alignment with priority areas. By adopting a lifespan approach, these initiatives consider targeted interventions across all age groups and reflect the broader objectives of the ACT Government.

**Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.**



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

**Date:** 24 / 12 / 25

This response required 6hrs 5mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$591.49.