

MEDICAL INDEMNITY SUBSIDY SCHEME, PEEL MATERNITY SERVICE

1112. Mr MARSHALL to the Minister for Health:

As a supplementary question, I ask the minister to urgently consider that from 1 July - only seven or eight days away - there might not be a maternity service in the entire Peel region.

Mr KUCERA replied:

That is not the advice I have been given. There is a public hospital at Peel. Doctors who work in the public hospital system are covered automatically. The problem in Peel is not with public obstetric services. Many doctors in the private obstetric hospital there pay for their patients through a private system. There is a capacity for doctors to come into the public hospital system and work for a salary. There is a capacity for the Government to transfer people from Peel to the King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women. In most instances, difficult births are transferred automatically to King Edward Memorial Hospital. It is the ordinary, non-complicated births attended privately by doctors that are creating the current problems. There will continue to be obstetric services in the private system as much as we can support them. However, doctors choose to withdraw their services, for whatever reason; it happened at Swan District Hospital last year for safety reasons. There is nothing I can do if doctors in the electorate of the member for Dawesville choose to withdraw their services because they do not want to pay their insurance premiums. We can sustain their services, but only to a certain level.