

WA COUNTRY HEALTH SERVICE — CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES — WAIT TIMES

326. Ms M.J. Davies to the Minister for Health:

- (1) Can the Minister please provide the current wait list period (in months) for children aged under 6 for the following services, broken down into WA Country Health Service (WACHS) sub regions:
 - (a) Audiological assessments;
 - (b) Speech pathology assessments or therapy;
 - (c) Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) services and surgeries; and
 - (d) Developmental paediatrician services?
- (2) Can the Minister please provide the current wait list period (in months) for children aged over 6 for the following services, broken down into WA Country Health Service (WACHS) sub regions:
 - (a) Audiological assessments;
 - (b) Speech pathology assessments or therapy;
 - (c) ENT services and surgeries; and
 - (d) Developmental paediatrician services?
- (3) What is the current staffing gap in Full Time Equivalent (FTE) in WACHS, for the following services targeted at children under the age of 18:
 - (a) Audiological assessments;
 - (b) Speech pathology assessments or therapy;
 - (c) ENT services and surgeries; and
 - (d) Developmental paediatrician services?
- (4) What is the current staffing gap in FTE in the Child and Adolescent Health Service (CAHS) for the following services:
 - (a) Audiological assessments;
 - (b) Speech pathology assessments or therapy;
 - (c) ENT services and surgeries; and
 - (d) Developmental paediatrician services?
- (5) What are the “did not attend” rates for the 2021–22 financial year, for children under the age of 18, for medical and allied health appointments in the following health service provider regions or sub regions:
 - (a) East Metropolitan Health Service;
 - (b) North Metropolitan Health Service;
 - (c) South Metropolitan Health Service, including services in the Peel region which are captured by the area for the South Metropolitan Health Service;
 - (d) CAHS; and
 - (e) WACHS:
 - (i) South West;
 - (ii) Wheatbelt;
 - (iii) Great Southern;
 - (iv) Goldfields;
 - (v) Midwest;
 - (vi) Pilbara; and
 - (vii) Kimberley?
- (6) For children under the age of 18, what initiatives does the government have in place to reduce the waitlists, did not attend rates, and to increase the staffing levels in rural, regional, and remote locations?
- (7) Are any interstate or international service models being considered for adoption or trial within WACHS sub regions, whether by WACHS or by CAHS? If yes, please detail:
 - (a) The name of the service model;
 - (b) The service provider sub region where the service model is being applied;

- (c) The age cohort targeted;
- (d) Stage of adoption or trial for the service model;
- (e) If any trial sites have been chosen and the locations for each service model; and
- (f) If the Future Health and Research Innovation Fund is being leveraged for the service, and the amount of funding being provided by the Future Health and Research Innovation Fund?

Ms A. Sanderson replied:

- (1)–(2) The Department of Health has invested significant effort through the Sustainable Health Review Implementation program to address a wide range of critical reforms, including comprehensive Outpatient Reform Projects that involve extensive work to improve the quality, consistency and accuracy of outpatient data. This will enable accurate reporting of wait times for outpatient appointments to assist clinicians and the public in accessing appropriate care. Further work is occurring to identify and remediate identified quality issues. Until such time as these reforms are complete, reliable outpatient waiting time data is unavailable.
- (3) The current difference between the staffing establishment and currently employed staff for WACHS for services for children under the age of 18 is:
 - (a) 0.53 FTE
 - (b) 14.75 FTE
 - (c) WACHS does not directly employ ENT medical practitioners; services are contracted.
 - (d) Paediatricians directly employed by WACHS deliver both developmental and general paediatric services.
- (4)
 - (a) Community Health Audiology – Nil vacancy
PCH Audiology – Nil vacancy
 - (b) Community Health Speech Pathology – 4.0 FTE
PCH Speech Pathology – Nil vacancy
 - (c) ENT Department – Nil vacancy
 - (d) Community Health Developmental Paediatric Services – 0.5FTE Registrar
- (5) (a)–(e) [See tabled paper no [1013](#).]
- (6) WA Health has a comprehensive Outpatient Reform Program (OPR Program) in place consisting of multiple reform initiatives aimed at ensuring timely, equitable, cost-effective and clinically appropriate access to public outpatient services. This is a state-wide program, covering both adult and paediatric services that is currently funded over 4 years.

WACHS has also implemented strategies to recruit and retain clinicians providing services to children under the age of 18.
- (7) WACHS continually reviews the service it provides to identify opportunities for improvement.