

SNAKEBITES — ANTIVENOM

1020. Hon RICK MAZZA to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to *The Sunday Times* article of 28 October titled “Family snakebite anger” about a near-fatal king brown snake bite south of Southern Cross.

- (1) Which Western Australian regional health centres currently stock antivenom?
- (2) How many reported snakebites have there been in the past five years in regional WA?
- (3) How many of these snakebites resulted in the death of the patient?
- (4) How many snakebite victims required the Royal Flying Doctor Service due to no antivenom being available locally?
- (5) What is the cost of a single dose of antivenom?
- (6) What measures is the minister taking to ensure antivenom is widely available in regional areas?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Of the 81 WA Country Health Service facilities, 69 currently stock antivenom.

I seek leave to have the list of facilities incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The following material was incorporated —

• Albany	• Dongara	• Lake Grace
• Beverley	• Esperance	• Laverton
• Boddington	• Exmouth	• Lenora
• Bridgetown	• Fitzroy Crossing	• Manjimup
• Broome	• Geraldton	• Marble Bar
• Bruce Rock	• Gnowangerup	• Margaret River
• Bunbury	• Goomalling	• Meekatharra
• Busselton	• Halls Creek	• Menzies
• Carnarvon	• Harvey	• Merredin
• Collie	• Jurien Bay	• Moora
• Coral Bay	• Kalbarri	• Morawa
• Corrigin	• Kalgoorlie	• Mt Barker
• Cue	• Karratha	• Mt Magnet
• Cunderdin	• Kellerberrin	• Mullewa
• Dalwallinu	• Kondinin	• Narembeen
• Denmark	• Kununoppin	• Narrogin
• Derby	• Kununurra	• Newman
• Norseman	• Port Hedland	• Tom Price
• Northam	• Quairading	• Wagin
• Northampton	• Ravensthorpe	• Wongan Hills
• Onslow	• Roebourne	• Wyalkatchem
• Paraburdoo	• Southern Cross	• Yalgoo
• Pingelly	• Three Springs	• York

- (2) WACHS is not able to provide this data within the requested time frame and asks for this part of the question to be put on notice.
- (3) WACHS is again unable to provide this data as this information is not readily available on its system.
- (4) WACHS is unable to provide this data as this information is not readily available on its system. However, WACHS facilitates aeromedical transfer to tertiary facilities of envenomed patients who present to a small hospital for definitive treatment, which may include antivenom and medical and nursing care.

- (5) The cost for the five major antivenoms stocked is: \$361 per phial for brown snake antivenom; \$1 587 per phial for black snake antivenom; \$453 per phial for tiger snake antivenom; \$1 617 per phial for death adder antivenom; and \$2 348 per phial for polyvalent antivenom.
- (6) WACHS has been reviewing its guidelines since July 2018, following changes to the management of snake envenomation at a national level and the availability of specialist medical support through the emergency telehealth service, which has enabled more comprehensive assessment of suspected snakebite patients in country health services. WACHS is progressively expanding antivenom stock across the 81 sites to ensure the availability and use of antivenom in patients who present with symptoms of snakebite envenomation. Snake envenomation is complex and not all manifestations of envenomation are able to be treated with antivenom. Antivenom administration is not without risks including variable rates of anaphylaxis—up to 40 per cent for some antivenoms. WACHS supports the minimum stock levels defined by the WA Therapeutic Advisory Group critical medicines list for the antivenom. However, it has been determined that an expanded availability of antivenoms can be supported.