

CRAIGIE DENTAL THERAPY CENTRE

**1263. Mrs C.L. EDWARDES to the Minister for Health:**

I refer the minister to the operation of the school dental service at Craigie.

- (1) Is the minister aware that the school dental clinic does not have replacement staff if a staff member is ill?
- (2) Is the minister aware that the Craigie school dental clinic has been struggling for the past three weeks due to a lack of staff?
- (3) What commitment will the minister give to ensure that the Craigie school dental clinic is adequately resourced?
- (4) Does the minister know how many other school dental services are in the same position?

**Mr J.A. McGINTY replied:**

I thank the member for Kingsley for some notice as it enabled me to obtain a detailed response from the Department of Health.

- (1) Extended leave such as annual leave and long service leave is covered by replacement staff, but short-term illness of an individual staff member is not. That is the established staffing practice. If an emergency dental treatment issue arises during the absence of a staff member, patients can access emergency care at a nearby dental therapy centre, such as Marmion, which I believe is the closest centre to Craigie.
- (2) I am advised that the Craigie dental therapy centre has been operating to its usual staffing, except between 13 and 16 October, when it was closed due to staff illness. The dental assistant was relocated to another dental service, as she could not carry out any meaningful work in the absence of the dental therapist.
- (3)-(4) All centres are staffed on the basis of approximately one therapist to every 2 000 school students. Centres also provide telephone and contact addresses for emergencies. At any time that there is a backlog of work, resources can be deployed to meet those needs. The Craigie dental therapy centre is resourced on the same basis as other dental services in the area. The Department of Health has advised me that at no time was the dental health of the children compromised.