

CORONAVIRUS — REGIONAL COVID-19 CLINICS

108. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. What procedures for testing now are occurring in regional areas, particularly those that do not have doctors or medical assistants readily to hand; are people reporting to the emergency departments or to their general practitioners?

Mr R.H. COOK replied:

It is a bit of both, member. What would generally happen in a regional setting is that the GP may refer the patient to a hospital setting to receive the pathology test that they need. Those tests would then be sent to Perth and be tested, with a turnaround of about 48 hours. We would also expect a number of patients to be reporting to local emergency departments and they, too, would either have swabs taken in the ED or be referred to the pathology laboratories, depending on how big the regional centre is.

We are well set up. As I said earlier today, we are now testing over 300 people a day. I want members to understand what this looks like in a place that is not as well served by its public health authorities, such as the United States of America, where there is a single testing laboratory in Washington DC. People anywhere in the United States will be tested and that test will be referred to Washington DC for testing and it would then go back to the original state. That gives members an indication of just how well established and set up we are here in Western Australia to combat this bug.