

TELEMEDICINE PROGRAMS, NATURE, LOCATION AND COST

589. Mr L. Graham to the Minister for Health

- (1) Are any telemedicine programs operating in Western Australia?
- (2) If not, why not?
- (3) If yes -
 - (a) what programs are operating;
 - (b) in what location are the programs available;
 - (c) what is the cost of each program;
 - (d) how long has each program been in operation;
 - (e) what is the life of each program; and
 - (f) from what budget source is each program funded?

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

1. Yes.
2. Not applicable.
3. (a) There are numerous Telemedicine services available throughout the State's 86 Telehealth sites. Examples of these include ophthalmology, radiology, psychiatry, renal medicine, neurology, emergency medicine, rehabilitation, palliative care, dermatology, paediatric services and allied health services such as dietetics, speech pathology and occupational therapy. In addition the system is used for:
 - Tele-education (which is an important and complementary service to clinical care);
 - Enhanced management of the health system.Telepsychiatry programs provide clinical services to clients and clinical education to all mental health professionals in rural and remote regions. The service is provided between the metropolitan and rural sites and within all rural regions.

Current programs include:

 - Child and Adolescence Mental Health Program which provides rural and remote mental health workers with a specialist Child and Adolescence psychiatrist for assessment and therapy for referred clients, case conferencing and clinical supervision for mental health workers;
 - Cognitive Behavioural Therapy training program and the Personality Disorder training program. Both of these programs provide training in these areas to mental health workers and follow-up supervision to help clinicians use these techniques with clients;
 - The Old Age Mental Health program is in the process of being developed and will provide clinical services for elderly clients.
- (b) Telehealth services are generally available in accordance with service agreements reached between participating health services and the Department of Health. For example, Teleradiology is available at a number of country locations including Derby, Broome, Port Hedland, Karratha, Carnarvon, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Esperance, Albany, Northam, Bunbury and Katanning.

Some services are available to all equipped sites eg psychiatry, emergency medicine and neurology whilst others are specific to sites that are trialing Telehealth arrangements, for example ophthalmology between Port Hedland and Perth, renal medicine between Royal Perth Hospital (RPH) and Kalgoorlie, dermatology between Exmouth and RPH and speech pathology between Perth and Dalwallinu.

The Telepsychiatry network has some forty sites in the majority of Mental Health service units state-wide. A list of Telehealth sites with their inception dates is appended. Programs delivered through these sites and the Telehealth network are available state-wide.
- (c) Most Telehealth services are or have been supported by the combined DOH WA and Commonwealth Government Telehealth pilot project grant funding for a trial period. This total funding is for \$16 million available between 1999 and 2004. Services are funded for a limited

period based on an estimate of the potential service that will be provided. The amount of funds needed and the length of the trial varies significantly. Following completion of trials, health providers adopt suitable Telehealth services and fund this from within existing resources. Accordingly, in any given year a service may have been funded by project