

QUEEN ELIZABETH II MEDICAL CENTRE — SATELLITE BIRTHING FACILITY

805. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Health:

I have a supplementary question. How does the minister plan to staff this idea, given her government's inability to address the multitude of staffing issues plaguing the health system?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

We staff our hospitals with expert clinicians. Our clinicians work across 2.6 million square kilometres in Western Australia. We deliver birthing services around the biggest health jurisdiction in the world and the member is arguing about 18 kilometres. We deliver birthing services around 2.6 million —

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, member for Vasse.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Currently, women who give birth at King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women and become critically ill are rushed to Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital. In fact, let me highlight a letter from the head of the neonatal intensive care unit at Fiona Stanley Hospital, whose opinions the member is summarily ignoring.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please.

Ms A. SANDERSON: The head of the neonatology service at Fiona Stanley Hospital —

Ms L. Mettam: Oh—Fiona Stanley.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please, members.

Several members interjected.

Ms A. SANDERSON: Wow!

The SPEAKER: All members, that is unacceptable. It is also unacceptable for the member for Vasse to still be talking. Member for Vasse, when you constantly interject like that, it provokes the response that we get. It is a supplementary question. You are entitled to ask that supplementary question. I would like to get the answer to that, but we cannot have every third or fourth word of the minister interrupted with a comment.

Ms A. SANDERSON: It is clear that the Leader of the Liberal Party has a total disregard for clinicians who do not live and work in the western suburbs. That is absolutely clear and on the record in the parliamentary *Hansard*. The majority of clinicians and healthcare workers live and work outside Nedlands and Subiaco, and that is where the majority of health care is delivered. The Leader of the Liberal Party cannot disregard the views of all clinicians, and it is clear that she is only listening to a group.

Ms L. Mettam: We are talking about the high-risk units.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Ms A. SANDERSON: Let us address that in this letter. I have so much correspondence from clinicians. I have met with clinicians. I have received letters from clinicians. My office has received letters from clinicians who are deeply distressed at the position that the Leader of the Liberal Party has taken because she is not listening to everyone's views. Anyone who says that there is a uniform position on this issue is deliberately misleading because there is not. I quote from a very highly esteemed and very experienced neonatal intensive care physician —

Time and again, we have been told that babies will die if we don't have a NICU close to PCH. It is time we convey the truth. For years, critically ill babies from far off places have been shifted safely to KEM and PCH.

There is no reason —

... why this would not be the case ... in future.

Further —

For years, KEMH has been delivering some women's pregnancies electively at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital ... mostly for maternal reasons. There is no reason why the handful time critical cases diagnosed antenatally, cannot be delivered at SCGH (as has been the practice ... at KEMH), and shifted quickly to PCH NICU. The most appropriate model for delivering the handful antenatally diagnosed true time critical cases at SCGH can be decided by joint discussions between the feto-maternal, neonatal, and NETS WA team.

This is done now, and the Leader of the Liberal Party is calling it a thought bubble.

Dr J. Krishnan: Madam Speaker —

Ms L. Mettam: The minister is reading —

The SPEAKER: Sorry; the member for Vasse has not been given the call yet. I am going to give her the call. Pause, please, member for Riverton.

Tabling of Paper

Ms L. METTAM: Madam Speaker, the minister appears to be reading from an official document. I ask that she table it this time.

The SPEAKER: I have been able to see the document from here. It has highlights and notes on it, so it is not an official document.

Ms L. Mettam: Not again.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Sorry? If you would like to remain in this chamber, you will not question the chair's ruling.

A member interjected.

The SPEAKER: As will the person who made that comment.