

COMMUNITY DENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

653. Hon JIM CHOWN to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to budget paper No 2, page 127, item 7, regarding community dental health services. I note that the services contained therein include dental services for school-age children aged five to 16 years and attending Department of Education–recognised schools, and adults who are geographically disadvantaged. The section also includes additional and specialist dental services. I note that the total cost of community dental health services in the current financial year is approximately \$110 million.

- (1) Will the minister advise the number of infants aged under five years residing in rural areas and the number of children aged five to 16 years residing in rural areas who are anticipated to access community dental health services in 2017–18?
- (2) Will the minister advise the budget allocations for 2017–18 within regional hospitals or other regional facilities to provide services for specialised paediatric dentistry services for infants under the age of five years prior to being eligible to access school dental services?
- (3) At which rural locations are these specialised paediatric dental services located?
- (4) For school-age children in rural areas, which local specialist dental facilities are available to them and what is the amount of funding for these services for 2017–18?

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. On behalf of the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health, I advise the following.

- (1) Of the infants and children residing in rural areas, including the Mandurah region, 150 infants aged under five years and 45 000 children aged five to 16 years are anticipated to access community dental health services in 2017–18. These estimated figures are based on 2016–17 information.
- (2) Community dental health services is not funded to provide specialised paediatric dental services. The Country Patients Dental Subsidy Scheme and the DHS school dental service do not provide specialised paediatric dentistry services. The WA Country Health Service does not receive any funding from the community dental services line item in the *Budget Statements*.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) The only specialist dental services for school-age children in rural areas is orthodontic specialist services. Private orthodontic specialists are available in a number of rural locations in Western Australia from the Kimberley to the great southern. Community dental health services partners with private orthodontic practitioners to provide subsidised orthodontic treatment to school-age children via the Private Orthodontic Subsidy Scheme. The scheme enables children who possess a Health Care or Pensioner Concession Card to obtain subsidised specialist orthodontic care from local participating private orthodontists without the need to travel to Perth to obtain such care. It is anticipated that approximately 40 school-age children will receive care to an approximate value of \$190 000 via the Private Orthodontic Subsidy Scheme. This is based on 2016–17 information.