

Dear Committee Honourable members,

I am a GP in the Perth Hills. Much of my practice is related to mental health consultations and management, including in children and young people.

Developmental conditions, including autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and ADHD are very common in our population, and early treatment and management has long been recognised as essential for good clinical care and long-term outcomes.

I have previously worked in the hospital system, in both metro and rural areas, and have seen the devastating impact of a lack of child development services on patients, their families and carers, as well as those around a child including siblings, schools etc..

The lack of access to all areas of child development services, in both public and private settings, is frankly a disgrace, and a travesty in 2022 in Western Australia. It is unacceptable and demonstrates a lack of willingness and care for these young people, for their health, their wellbeing, and their futures.

Getting into allied health services (eg. occupational therapy, speech therapy, psychology) can be life-changing, assisting patients and their families with the skills and supports they need.

Getting into specialist medical services (eg. paediatrics and psychiatry) can be life-changing, assisting with further support, education and medication, if appropriate.

In the absence of access within the public system, patients are forced to spend exceeding amounts of time and money looking at private options, sometimes even travelling/attending clinics in other states. Additionally, the block on GPs being able to initiate and prescribe stimulant medications (by PBS guidelines and WA Health Poisons Act restrictions) means that life-changing medications are denied to vulnerable patients.

I continue to be dismayed at a lack of action on this front, and appreciate this Committee's work in this area.

Thank you for your consideration.