

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Guyula to the Minister for Health:

Treatment for Syphilis

- 1. Please advise whether there are funds designated for dealing with the wide-spread problems of Syphilis in the NT.**

The Northern Territory Department of Health Centre for Disease Control Sexual Health and Blood Borne Virus Unit delivers a response to the syphilis outbreak from within existing resources. In 2017-18, approximately \$188 000 was spent on the outbreak response.

- 2. Are there any reasons for delays reported by health providers to get access to treatments for people?**

Finding people who have tested positive for syphilis can be difficult and takes time, especially in remote areas and among itinerant populations.

- Many people are asymptomatic and do not know they are infected.
- The results of standard syphilis serology blood tests are usually only available after seven to 10 days.
- Finding contacts of syphilis is a difficult and time-consuming process. Clients are often reluctant to provide details of previous sexual contacts due to associated negative connotations of shame and stigma around contracting syphilis.