

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

**WRITTEN QUESTION**

Mrs Finocchiaro to the Minister for Health:

**Disease control**

- 1. How did Territory Health cope with the measles outbreak earlier this year? Was there enough medicine? Was it a surprise or had there been warnings from overseas or interstate?**

The Department of Health Centre for Disease Control (CDC) led the public health response when a case of measles was identified within the Northern Territory. CDC ensured all contacts of each case were traced and received appropriate messaging and, where required, vaccination or immunoglobulin.

Increased supplies of measles vaccinations and immunoglobulin were sourced and distributed to the most affected areas of the Darwin region. Supplies were monitored daily and re-distributed in the region as required.

CDC maintained surveillance of reports of measles outbreaks throughout South East Asia and in other jurisdictions early in 2019. Informative alerts were routinely sent to clinicians.

- 2. Has it been necessary to review any public health measures in the wake of the outbreak? If so, what has been the result?**

CDC follows the National Guidelines for Public Health Units for measles in conjunction with local outbreak response guidelines. The combine response was effective and there are no recommendations for change arising from this event.

- 3. There was an increase in doses of penicillin delivered annually under the Rheumatic Heart Disease control program from about 11,000 in 2014 to about 15,000 in 2017 (AR, p15). Are we closer to slowing down the rate? How much does the program cost to deliver each year?**

The NT Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) Control Program is funded by the Australian Government through the *Rheumatic Fever Strategy* National Partnership Agreement (NPA). In 2018-19, the Northern Territory received \$925 000 under the NPA.

The number of people being diagnosed with ARF and/or RHD is not yet declining in the Northern Territory. Additional resources have been directed to Aboriginal Medical Services to reduce the rates of disease locally.

Eliminating RHD is a priority action area of the Council of Australian Governments Health Council and the Northern Territory is an active participant.