

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

### WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Finocchiaro to the Minister for Health:

#### Health Clinic Staff Safety

- 1. What measures are being/have been/were put in place to ensure the safety of health clinic staff over the holiday season (Dec 2019 to 29 Feb 2020)?**

During the holiday season (December 2019 to 31 January 2020) a number of strategies have been put in place to ensure the safety of health clinic staff, these include:

- Staff perform a risk assessment prior to attending call outs
- Staff attend all call outs with a second responder
- Staff have a script to read if calling police to reduce ambiguity in message
- Vehicles have GPS installed to facilitate monitoring and tracking of movement
- In Central Australia, staff travelling outside a community communicate their arrival and departure back to the health clinic
- Clear escalation pathway documented to raise concerns regarding safety and a senior manager is always available on-call
- All NT Health staff housing has access to broadband internet which facilitates access to client medical records prior to attending call outs
- Duress alarms exist in health centres with clear protocols on response

- 2. Do/did you plan to have ALL NTG health clinics open and operational over the holiday season (Dec 2019 to 29 Feb 2020)?**

During the holiday season period December 2019 to 31 January 2020, both Top End Health Service and Central Australia Health Service intend to have all clinics open and operational. Contingency plans are in place should staffing availability change due to unexpected or emergent leave.

- 3. Will/were ALL NTG health clinics (be) open and operational over the holiday season (Dec 2019 to 29 Feb 2020)?**

See response to sub question 2.

**4. What measures are you implementing to ensure the safety of NTG health clinic staff in the future?**

NT Health is working in collaboration with other Government Agencies to strengthen our response to safety concerns for all staff working in remote areas.

Specifically for health clinic staff:

- Regular meetings are scheduled with the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics and the Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development and Housing to ensure all repairs related to safety are completed in a timely manner
- Current work being completed to strengthen the policy framework that supports threats to safety for all workers in rural and remote clinics
- Looking at devices and tools currently utilised by other agencies to track and monitor staff movements in remote locations
- Pilot a training program to provide staff with skills in de-escalation, situational awareness and self-defence.