

Estimates Committee 2008
Questions Taken On Notice

(17/6/2008 to 20/6/2008)

Date: 18/06/2008 Output: Health and Wellbeing Services
Sub Output: Community Health Services

Subject: Community Health Service Visits to Nursing Mothers

From: Mr Matt Conlan MLA to Dr Chris Burns MLA
Minister for Health

Question: 5-7
What are the visiting services and how many are there for nursing mothers?

Answer:
Answered On: 21/07/2008

QUESTION ON NOTICE 5.7

What are the visiting services and how many are there for Nursing mothers?

ANSWER

Community Midwifery Practice (CMP) - provide discharge from the Birth Centre at Royal Darwin Hospital 4 hours post delivery, with daily home visits (more if required) for four days after the birth with a 5th day being optional. Women then go to the CMP rooms one week later and, if all is well, they will be discharged to Child and Family Health Services (usually between day five to 22 after birth). If there are ongoing concerns, extra home or clinic visits are scheduled with hand over to appropriate support services if issues continue beyond four weeks. Under this program, 5.4 FTE Midwives provide postnatal care to approximately 244 women per year in Darwin. CMP in Alice Springs is currently under development.

The Midwifery in the home (MITH) program is funded by the NT Government and provided by the Golden Glow Nursing Agency in Darwin. It provides an early discharge program from day one after birth for women birthing at Royal Darwin Hospital. Daily home visits are made up to day three for normal birth and day five for a caesarean section. The women remain in a virtual ward at their homes and are discharged from Royal Darwin Hospital on day three or five respectively. Under this program two Midwives are employed part-time covering seven days per week.

Outreach Midwives provide support to remote health staff for training, implementation of best practice guidelines and contributing to shared antenatal and postnatal care, particularly in communities without a resident Midwife. The number of Outreach Midwives has increased from four to six FTE with recent funding through the NT Government's Closing the Gap initiative.

The Strong Women Strong Babies Strong Culture Program operates in some remote communities. Under this program, remote community-based women (Strong Women Workers) are employed to support the pregnancy and postnatal care of indigenous women in a bi-cultural model of care. There are currently approximately nine FTEs, with plans to increase this number.

The Australian Breastfeeding Association is funded by the NT Government and provides among other services, an NT wide telephone counselling service with the possibility of home visits where practicable. Volunteers staff this program.

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (Alice Springs) is funded by the NT Government to provide an "Under 5's" Program. The service includes early childhood development services for Aboriginal children from 0 – 2 years,

comprehensive postnatal care to mothers and babies, and provides an outreach holistic parenting service.

Childbirth Education Association, Darwin and Alice Springs is funded by the NT Government to provide pregnancy, childbirth and parenting support; and to enhance and promote the health of pregnant women, infants and their families through improving access to birthing services for first time mothers, teenagers and Aboriginal women.

The Home Birth Service is provided by the Department of Health and Families in Darwin (including Palmerston) and in Alice Springs. Low-risk women are offered a woman-centred, continuity of carer model of service through the antenatal, birthing and post-natal period. Postnatal midwifery care is provided in the home up to week six.

The Department of Health and Families' (Urban) Child & Family Health Service provides a range of parent support and children's developmental services, from 0 – 5 years. All families are offered an initial home visit following the birth of their baby, and recommended key contacts are provided at 4 weeks, 6-8 weeks, 4 months, 6-8 months, 12 and 18 months. These are available to all mothers, whether they are "nursing" or not. In addition, all Urban Community Care/Community Health Centres have drop-in sessions available when mothers with "well baby" or parenting issues, including breastfeeding, may seek advice from a specialist Child & Family Health Nurse. Child & Family Health nurses in all urban regional centres, including Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Nhulunbuy and in Darwin through service outlets at Palmerston, Casuarina, Nightcliff and Karama provide these services.