

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Question Taken on Notice

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From: J Davis

To: Hon Steve Edgington MLA

Portfolio: Health

Agency: Department of Health

Subject: Modelling of long-term benefits of prevention

QUESTION:

What modelling has the department undertaken on the long-term health and fiscal benefits of increased investment in prevention, particularly in relation to chronic disease, mental health and child wellbeing?

ANSWER:

NT Health's Burden of Disease (BoD) studies, conducted every 5 years since 1996, provides a strong evidence base for prevention planning. Data for 2019-2023 will be released later this year. Analysis indicates that life expectancy among Territorians continues to improve, primarily due to better management of chronic conditions, improved population screening and earlier access to treatment. The findings also show:

- Injuries and chronic diseases account for the majority of total health loss in the Northern Territory, including years of life lost and years lived with a disability.
- The top 5 risk factors contributing to total BoD were socio-economic disadvantage, high body mass, alcohol intake, physical inactivity, and tobacco.

Reporting on specific issues, such as cancer survival, is also showing improvements driven by enhanced screening and access to early treatment.

Routine analysis demonstrates increasing challenges in the complexity of diseases and multimorbidity in the Northern Territory, signalling opportunities to strengthen policies and initiatives to address long term health outcomes in chronic conditions, mental health and wellbeing through prevention.

NT Health acknowledges further work is required to improve healthy places and healthy behaviours (primordial and primary prevention) to enhance long term health outcomes for Territorians. NT Health continues to explore further opportunities to develop robust models that better determine the benefits of primordial and primary prevention work for chronic disease, mental health and child wellbeing.