

**Question No: 225**

**Question: Mental Health Services - Alice Springs Region**

**Date: 17/11/92**

**Member: Mr BAILEY**

**To: MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES**

1. What mental health services are offered in the Alice Springs region by the Department of Health and Community Services.
2. What mental health services are offered by Alice Springs-based Department of Health and Community Services officers to bush areas.
3. What facilities and services provided by the Alice Springs region of the Department of Health and Community Services cater for forensic psychiatry.
4. What facilities are in place to cater for acute care.
5. What rehabilitation facilities are available within the Alice Springs region.
6. What community education programs and other pro-active community work is conducted in the above areas by the Department of Health and Community Services, or is funded by the department.
7. What are the details of accommodation options available to clients in the Alice Springs region.
8. Are the current accommodation facilities adequate in number and type for the needs of clients.
9. What is the current availability of rooms at this accommodation.
10. What mental health services are provided to children in the above areas in the Alice Springs region.
11. What counselling services are offered in the Alice Springs region.

**ANSWER**

1. A 12-bed acute unit plus outpatient, day patient and community support services.
2. A Registered Psychiatric Nurse visits rural communities and provides assessment and on-going treatment.  
  
A Specialist Psychiatrist visits selected communities to assess and treat new referrals and review other patients.  
  
A Registered Psychiatric Nurse provides a service to rural communities when circumstances require rapid intervention.
3. The Specialist Psychiatrist, Psychiatric Registrar and a Community Nurse provide clinical services to the Alice Springs Prison.

Prisoners are occasionally admitted to the specialist mental health ward at the Alice Springs Hospital and are accompanied by prison officers.

In certain cases mentally-ill prisoners are referred to ward 9, Royal Darwin Hospital.

4. A specialist 12-bed ward is located on the ground floor of general hospital, and 7 beds are designated for acute cases.

Acute patient care is also provided in the outpatient clinics and where appropriate in the patient's residence.

5. Five of the 12 beds in the inpatient unit are identified as rehabilitation beds.

Rehabilitation programs are also conducted at the Day Centre located in Community House.

Home visits by Community Psychiatric Nurses are provided in the urban area.

6. Primary prevention strategies are a part of the mental health strategies for the district.

These activities include -

the preparation and the distribution of educational pamphlets;  
provision of lectures to staff from many other agencies;  
liaison and support for other health professionals is an important and continuing process; and  
Schizophrenia and Mental Health Week are utilized for community education.

7. Northern Territory Housing Commission pensioner flats are provided on request. The utilization of mainstream accommodation reduces the potential for stigma and brings the mentally-ill closer to other community resources. Other options include -

Private rental;  
Salvation Army; and  
Mainstream Hostels.

8. A transitional living and respite care facility is currently being planned.

A residence has been identified, and negotiations are currently under way to acquire the building. This facility is expected to meet an important need in the community.

9. Not defined.

10. Children, adolescents and family members have access to outpatient sessions located at Flynn Drive, Community Health Centre.

This service is supported by a small multi-disciplinary team.

11. Counselling services are an integral part of a mental health service.

Counselling may include psychotherapy, family therapy, and behavioural therapy which may be utilized alone or in conjunction with other psychiatric interventions.