

Question on Notice

No. 386

Asked on 27 March 2019

MR R KATTER asked the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (HON DR S MILES)—

QUESTION

With reference to extremely sick kids from North Queensland and their families relocating to access children's oncology services, which are primarily delivered out of Brisbane—

Will the Minister advise if consideration will be given to establishing a permanent children's oncology service in North Queensland, such as at the Townsville or Cairns Hospital, to ensure families from the region can access treatment closer to home?

ANSWER

I am advised that the overwhelming evidence in published medical studies is that specialised hospitals, that manage higher numbers of patients together with extensive multidisciplinary team support, are associated with better outcomes for children with cancer.

For a state the size of Queensland, optimal outcomes can only be achieved through a centralised model of care in Brisbane, with access to a broad range of specialist nursing and medical services, along with psychosocial support services and a focus on clinical trials.

All states utilise a similar centralised service model which produces the best outcomes for children with cancer.

Currently, there is a well-established model of shared care via the Queensland Paediatric Palliative Care, Haematology and Oncology Network. This enables safe delivery of chemotherapy in several regional centres, including Cairns, Townsville and Mackay in North Queensland. Additional outreach clinics and tele-health clinics are provided by the Queensland Children's Hospital to support not just children and their families from regional and remote areas, but also support the local clinicians to optimise the safe delivery of supportive care, where clinically appropriate.