

## **Question on Notice**

**No. 582**

**Asked on 13 May 2021**

**MR C BOYCE** ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES (HON Y D'ATH) –

### **QUESTION**

With reference to the closure of the First Avenue Medical Practice in Chinchilla, losing the only bulkbilling facility in the region and creating additional pressure on the Chinchilla Hospital—

Will the Minister advise what the Minister is doing to recruit more doctors for rural General Practice?

### **ANSWER**

The Commonwealth Government is responsible for funding primary care and does so under a private practice model underwritten by the taxpayer funded Medicare scheme.

It is not the role of Queensland Health to recruit general practitioners. It is a Commonwealth Government responsibility to provide an appropriately funded and incentivised general practice business model that supports our valuable rural general practitioners.

The Commonwealth has established Primary Health Networks who are responsible to support general practice sustainability and this is an appropriate partner for Queensland Health to work with to address the immediate need and long term sustainability of access to primary care for the community of Chinchilla.

The Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service (HHS) is aware of the closure of the medical centre and is reviewing the situation along with the Darling Downs West Moreton Primary Health Network and other key stakeholders to consider options for Chinchilla Primary Healthcare.

The Commonwealth has increased the bulk billing incentive in the latest budget, however, more needs to be done to recognise the value of rural general practice and improve the viability of these critical primary care businesses.

In Queensland, we have invested in Rural Generalist training with 172 qualified rural generalists completing their fellowship in general practice and 395 trainees across the pathway working in Queensland today.

Queensland Health is working to implement the Commonwealth Rural Health Commissioner recommendations and the Commonwealth commitment to a National Rural Generalist Pathway and has established a Commonwealth funded National

Rural Generalist Coordination Unit to ensure this investment provides further improvement to our rural general practice workforce.

Queensland Health will do all it can to ensure the Chinchilla community has access to medical care and is working to further support General Practice through innovative workforce models that improve the sustainability of rural general practice.