

Question on Notice

No. 1365

Asked on 10 November 2022

MR S KNUTH ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES (HON Y D'ATH)—

QUESTION

With reference to the current hospital admission process for adolescents suffering immediate and partially acute mental health—

Will the Minister explain why Queensland Health puts children and their carers through an admission process via Emergency Departments that directly enhances anxiety and the urge to self-harm?

ANSWER

Emergency Departments are often the first point of contact for young people and their carers presenting with self-harm, suicidality, or other mental health crises.

Emergency Departments are recognised as a place of safety for people in crisis that can provide emergency medical treatment and timely access to mental health care.

For most young people and families, the holistic medical and mental health care they receive in Emergency Departments is supportive and welcomed. However, Queensland Health understands that care in an Emergency Department is not always the best option for all children, young people, or families.

The 2022-23 State Budget included a record \$1.645 billion investment in services for people needing treatment and care for mental illness, substance use disorders and suicidality.

As part of this commitment, the Queensland Government released *Better Care Together: a plan for Queensland's state-funded mental health, alcohol and other drug services to 2027* on 14 October 2022.

The new plan will enhance existing services and deliver additional new options for children and young people in crisis, and their families where this is appropriate. Work is underway to finalise specific initiatives under the plan which could include new child and youth acute response teams to provide rapid assessment, brief intervention, and assertive community follow up, new models of care and services for adolescents and young people in regional areas, youth specific crisis responses and new models of care for young people with complex needs.

The new plan will also enhance and expand crisis support spaces. Crisis support spaces are designed to be a therapeutic, home-like environment with close proximity to the emergency department and provides support for people experiencing a mental health crisis. I'm advised the age range of crisis support spaces is currently being explored, with a view to expanding access to people aged 16 years and older experiencing mental health crisis. Under the Bilateral Schedule on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention with the Commonwealth, Queensland and the Federal Government will work together to provide clinical in-reach and consultation liaison into existing headspace services across Queensland to streamline transition of care between

headspace centres and mental health alcohol and other drugs services for young people aged 12-25 years. The Way Back Support Service which provides non-clinical psychosocial support for people post suicidal crisis aged 15 years will also be expanded throughout Queensland.

I am further advised, the Queensland Health guideline *Admission of children and adolescents to acute mental health inpatient units* (the Guideline) has recently been reviewed. The Guideline aims to support local services with decision making regarding the criteria and considerations for admitting a child or adolescent to a mental health inpatient unit to ensure state-wide consistency when determining the need for inpatient admission.