

NURSE PRACTITIONERS — EASTERN WHEATBELT

478. Hon Colin de Grussa to the minister representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the funding of nurse practitioners, specifically for the eastern wheatbelt, and the lack of funding to continue provision of basic healthcare in the eastern wheatbelt, and I ask:

- (a) how many communities will be impacted by the decision to remove funding for a Merredin-based nurse practitioner;
- (b) given WA Country Health Service committed to the development of a sustainable service model in March 2021, why is the organisation yet to take over the delivery of this critical service;
- (c) if a sustainable service model will not be available by 31 December 2021, what alternative funding model will be in place to ensure basic health services in the eastern wheatbelt; and
- (d) can the Minister provide assurance that when the current Nurse Practitioner's contract concludes at the end of December 2021, there will be no gap in service provision for the many regional communities which will be impacted?

Hon Sue Ellery replied:

Primary Health Care funding is a Commonwealth Government responsibility. The Nurse Practitioner's employment was funded by the Commonwealth Government through the Western Australian Primary Health Alliance.

- (a) Five communities.
- (b)–(c) WACHS-Wheatbelt committed to employing the Nurse Practitioner part-time for six months, to assist with the development of an appropriate model of care, however the Nurse Practitioner declined an offer of a contract with WACHS-Wheatbelt. WACHS is presently developing a model of care that utilises, nurse practitioner services to deliver chronic disease and aged care services. This will not directly replace the primary care-type services previously funded through WAPHA.
- (d) WAPHA have indicated that the services previously provided by the nurse practitioner are available in part through alternate Commonwealth and State Funded Programs.