

HEALTH STAFF — ASSAULTS AGAINST

2174. Hon Colin Tincknell to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:

I ask the Minister to report on the true extent of assaults in the health and mental health system. I refer to *The West Australian* newspaper report that medical staff are under attack and are being left inadequately protected against many high-risk patients. Therefore, I ask:

- (a) how many assaults on staff have there been in the public health system in the last five years and what is the underlying trend;
- (b) what kind of assaults are occurring;
- (c) where are the main hotspots for hospital staff being assaulted;
- (d) are high-risk areas being identified, and if yes:
 - (i) what security measures are being employed in these high-risk areas;
 - (ii) do any of our at-risk hospital staff currently have personal protection garments; and
 - (iii) if yes to (ii), what are they and when/where are they required; and
- (e) can the Government please highlight how it plans to better protect our doctors and nurses against serious assault?

Hon Alanna Clohesy replied:

I am advised:

(a)–(c) [See tabled paper no 2899.]

(d) Yes.

- (i) Examples of security measures employed at WA public hospitals include the provision of:
 - personal and fixed duress alarms;
 - closed circuit television;
 - security officer presence in high risk areas such as ED and/or regular security patrols;
 - Code Black Response Teams;
 - one-on-one staff or security for patients exhibiting aggressive behaviour;
 - Psychiatric Services Online Information System and system alerts created for patients with a previous history of aggressive behaviour; and
 - training, policies and procedures to help enhance staff and patient safety.
- (ii) No, however WA Health is currently undertaking a procurement process for stab resistant vests. These will be made available to all Health Service Providers.
- (iii) Not applicable.

(e) The McGowan Government has a zero tolerance for violence or aggression towards health staff, and is taking measures to address the issue.

I recently convened the Stop the Violence Summit (the Summit) in response to the recent unacceptable increase in violence against frontline health staff in the WA public health system.

The Summit was attended by health leaders, frontline health staff and representatives from WA Police, St John Ambulance, the mental health, drug and alcohol sectors, as well as unions and health consumers.

The Department of Health is compiling a report on the insights gained from discussions at the Summit, which in turn, will be used to determine the approach in responding to violent and aggressive behaviour across the public health system.