

NORTH WEST HOSPITALS — INFECTION PROTOCOLS BREACHES

227. Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM to the minister representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to a recent announcement that 250 patients will be contacted as a result of a breach of the infection protocols at Port Hedland Regional Hospital, Nickol Bay Hospital and Derby Regional Hospital.

- (1) How did the breach of infection protocols occur?
- (2) Has any patient testing begun; and, if yes, have any patients tested positive to any infections?
- (3) What support or compensation will be offered to anyone who may have been infected?
- (4) What endeavours will be made to alert patients who may not be immediately contactable?
- (5) What protocols are now in place to ensure that this does not happen again?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The breach occurred when a doctor did not follow established infection control practices and reused a piece of equipment.
- (2) Yes, patient testing at the WA Country Health Service's Pilbara clinic commenced on Friday, 30 April 2010. The WA Country Health Service is advising patients that there is a 10-day turnaround for results.
- (3) Nobody has been found to be infected to date. Treatment, support and counselling will be offered to all relevant patients.
- (4) If patients are not contactable by phone, they will be sent a registered letter. If the letter is unable to be delivered, further attempts will be made to contact the patient through the patient's original referring doctor.
- (5) The WA Country Health Service has always carried out best-practice infection control procedures. The same patient and staff safety and health standards and practices are used throughout all Western Australian public hospitals.