

MEDICAL CANNABIS

702. Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Health:

I refer the minister to research undertaken by researchers at the University of Oklahoma's college of medicine published earlier this year in the *American Journal of Perinatology* suggesting that easier access to medicinal cannabis has the potential to reduce maternal opioid use.

- (1) What proportion of pregnant women are prescribed opioids annually in Western Australia?
- (2) How many cases of neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome have been reported locally?
- (3) Will the minister take this latest research into account and advocate for the creation of a compassionate-access scheme to ease the financial burden on those looking to access medicinal cannabis while at the same time continuing to urge her federal colleagues to begin to list medicinal cannabis products on the pharmaceutical benefits scheme?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) In the last audit of the specialist drug and alcohol antenatal clinic, 14.9 per cent of women attending were prescribed opioid replacement therapy. This is prescribed to women with an addiction to heroin and other opioids.
- (2) There have been less than five cases of neonatal withdrawal symptoms from maternal use of drugs of addiction between June 2022 and May 2023.
- (3) No. Government funding of individual independent or privately-operated compassionate-access programs for medicines is not supported.