

Our reference: **ACTHDFOI23-24.46**



Dear ,

DECISION ON YOUR ACCESS APPLICATION

I refer to your application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (FOI Act), received by ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) on **Friday 26 April 2024**.

This application requested access to:

'Under the FOI Act I would like to be supplied with the following:

- *all ministerial briefs created by Canberra Health Services (CHS) and the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) since 30 June 2020 which discuss (a) altering the model of care provided by nurse-led, walk-in centres (b) Urgent Care Clinics and/or changing the name of nurse-led walk-in centres and (c) the model(s) of care to be implemented in relation to the Government's 5 new health centres.*
- *the proposal issued by Canberra Health Services to implement an Urgent Care Clinic by placing a GP into an existing CHS walk-in centre, and all related ministerial briefs and attachments created by CHS and ACTHD.*
- *all emails and attachments relating to the motion moved by Ms Suzanne Orr, MLA, on 11 April 2024 and the proposed amendment, including any such material held by the Minister for Health or her office.'*

I am an Information Officer appointed by the Director-General of ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) under section 18 of the FOI Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act. ACTHD was required to provide a decision on your access application by **Tuesday 02 July 2024**.

I have identified five documents holding the information within scope of your access application. These are outlined in the schedule of documents included at [Attachment A](#) to this decision letter.

Decisions

I have decided to:

- grant full access to three documents; and
- grant partial access to 2 documents.

My access decisions are detailed further in the following statement of reasons and the documents released to you are provided as [Attachment B](#) to this letter.

In reaching my access decision, I have taken the following into account:

- The FOI Act;
- The contents of the documents that fall within the scope of your request;
- The views of relevant third parties; and
- The *Human Rights Act 2004*.

Full Access

I have decided to grant full access to the documents at references: 1-2 and 5.

Partial Access

I have decided to grant partial access to the documents at references: 3-4. These documents contain information that I consider, on balance, to be contrary to the public interest to disclose under the test set out in Section 17 of the FOI Act. These documents also include information that is taken to be contrary to the public interest to release under Schedule 1 of the FOI Act.

Public Interest Factors Favouring Disclosure

The following factors were considered relevant in favour of the disclosure of the documents:

- Schedule 2, 2.1 (a)(i) promote open discussion of public affairs and enhance the government's accountability; and
- Schedule 2, 2.1 (a)(ii) contribute to positive and informed debate on important issues or matters of public interest.

Public Interest Factors Favouring Non-Disclosure

The following factors were considered relevant in favour of the non-disclosure of the documents:

- Schedule 2, 2.2 (a)(x) prejudice intergovernmental relations; and
- Schedule 2, 2.2 (a)(xiii) prejudice the competitive commercial activities of an agency.

Documents at references 3 are partially comprised of information classified as information that would be contrary to the public interest in accordance with Schedule 2, 2.2 (a)(x) prejudice intergovernmental relations.

Documents at references 3 and 4 are partially comprised of information classified as information that would be contrary to the public interest in accordance with Schedule 2, 2.2 (a)(xiii) prejudice the competitive commercial activities of an agency.

Documents at reference 3 are partially comprised of cabinet information under Schedule 1.6, and under Schedule 1.6 (1) Cabinet Information, it is taken to be contrary to the public interest to release. Schedule 1.6 (1)(d) the disclosure of which would reveal any deliberation of Cabinet (other than through the official publication of a Cabinet decision).

Charges

Processing charges are not applicable to this request.

Disclosure Log

Under section 28 of the FOI Act, ACTHD maintains an online record of access applications called a disclosure log. The scope of your access application, my decision and documents released to you will be published in the disclosure log not less than three days but not more than 10 days after the date of this decision. Your personal contact details will not be published.

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/freedom-information/disclosure-log>.

Ombudsman review

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the FOI Act. You have the right to seek Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the Act within 20 working days from the day that my decision is published in ACT Health's disclosure log, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman.

If you wish to request a review of my decision you may write to the Ombudsman at:

The ACT Ombudsman
GPO Box 442
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Via email: ACTFOI@ombudsman.gov.au
Website: ombudsman.act.gov.au

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) review

Under section 84 of the Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision. Further information may be obtained from the ACAT at:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal
Allara House
15 Constitution Avenue
GPO Box 370
Canberra City ACT 2601
Telephone: (02) 6207 1740
<http://www.acat.act.gov.au/>

Further assistance

Should you have any queries in relation to your request, please do not hesitate to contact the FOI Coordinator on (02) 5124 9831 or email HealthFOI@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Erica Nixon
Head of Office
Office of the Director-General


25 June 2024

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION SCHEDULE OF DOCUMENTS

Please be aware that under the *Freedom of Information Act 2016*, some of the information provided to you will be released to the public through the ACT Government's Open Access Scheme. The Open Access release status column of the table below indicates what documents are intended for release online through open access.

Personal information or business affairs information will not be made available under this policy. If you think the content of your request would contain such information, please inform the contact officer immediately.

Information about what is published on open access is available online at: <http://www.health.act.gov.au/public-information/consumers/freedom-information>

APPLICANT NAME	WHAT ARE THE PARAMETERS OF THE REQUEST	FILE NUMBER
	<p><i>Under the FOI Act I would like to be supplied with the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>all ministerial briefs created by Canberra Health Services (CHS) and the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) since 30 June 2020 which discuss (a) altering the model of care provided by nurse-led, walk-in centres (b) Urgent Care Clinics and/or changing the name of nurse-led walk-in centres and (c) the model(s) of care to be implemented in relation to the Government's 5 new health centres.</i> <i>the proposal issued by Canberra Health Services to implement an Urgent Care Clinic by placing a GP into an existing CHS walk-in centre, and all related ministerial briefs and attachments created by CHS and ACTHD.</i> <i>all emails and attachments relating to the motion moved by Ms Suzanne Orr, MLA, on 11 April 2024 and the proposed amendment, including any such material held by the Minister for Health or her office.</i> 	ACTHDFOI23-24.46

Ref Number	Page Number	Description	Date	Status Decision	Factor	Open Access release status
1.	01 - 03	GBC23/521 - Cabinet Submission CAB23/650 – Federation Funding Agreement – Medicare Urgent Care Clinics	24 August 2023	Full Release		YES
2.	04 - 12	MIN22/801 - Influenza Vaccine delivery	03 June 2022	Full Release		YES

3.	10 - 13	MIN2024/00072 - Implementation of additional Medicare Urgent Care Clinics	05 February 2024	Partial Release	Schedule 1.6 Cabinet Schedule 2.2(x) Intergovernmental Relations Schedule 2.2(xiii) Commercial Activities	YES
4.	14 - 19	GBC23/499 - Urgent Care Clinics – Federation Funding Agreement – Health Schedule	18 August 2023	Partial Release	Schedule 2.2(xiii) Commercial Activities	YES
5.	20 - 23	MIN22/1839 - Urgent Care Clinics - update and response to Minister Butler	23 December 2023	Full Release		YES
Total Number of Documents						
5						

ACT Health Directorate

To:	Minister for Health	Tracking No.: GBC23/521
CC:	Dave Pepper, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services	
From:	Rebecca Cross, Director-General	
Subject:	Cabinet Submission CAB23/650 – Federation Funding Agreement – Medicare Urgent Care Clinics	
Critical Date:	31/08/2023	
Critical Reason:	The Cabinet Submission is due for Final Lodgement with Cabinet Office on this date.	

Recommendation

That you sign the Cabinet Submission at Attachment 1 for final lodgement with Cabinet Office.

Signed / Not Signed / Please Discuss

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA/...../.....

Minister's Office Feedback

Background

1. The Federation Funding Agreement – Medicare Urgent Care Clinics ACT (FFA) has been finalised/executed and is ready for provision to Cabinet for noting – refer Attachment 1.

Issues

2. Your agreement is sought to the Cabinet Submission *Urgent Care Clinics – Federation Funding Agreement (Attachment 1)*, which is scheduled for consideration by the Expenditure Review Committee (ERC) on 8 September 2023, and Cabinet on 11 September 2023.
3. Detailed information on the FFA is outlined in the Cabinet Submission.
4. The FFA is going to ERC and Cabinet for noting only, as you sought agreement from the Chief Minister to bypass Cabinet for approval. You also sought agreement from the Chief Minister to bypass exposure draft circulation.
5. Bypassing exposure draft circulation and providing the FFA to Cabinet for noting, rather than agreement, will enable implementation of the Medicare Urgent Care Clinics, including processes to recruit clinical staff and procure medical imaging services, to commence in the coming weeks. This timeframe will meet the ACT's undertaking to the Commonwealth to pursue the procurement of medical imaging services in 2023.

Financial Implications

6. Treasury has been consulted on the FFA. An outline of the budget impacts and allocations against the FFA is provided in the Cabinet Submission.

ConsultationInternal

7. Relevant teams within the Corporate and Governance and Policy, Partnerships and Programs Divisions were consulted on the draft FFA with comments addressed where appropriate.

Cross Directorate

8. The ACT Government Solicitor, Canberra Health Services (CHS) and Treasury were consulted on the draft FFA with comments addressed where appropriate.

External

9. The FFA was negotiated and agreed between the ACT Health Directorate and the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care.

Work Health and Safety

10. Not applicable.

Benefits/Sensitivities

11. Not applicable.

Communications, media and engagement implications

12. CHS will lead development of communications for the Medicare Urgent Care Clinics. A communications plan is provided at Attachment E to the Cabinet Submission. A key

CABINET

consideration in promoting the Urgent Care Clinics will be retention of existing Walk-in Centre branding. The CHS Communications and Engagement team is in contact with your office on this issue.

Signatory Name: Rebecca Cross, Director-General Phone: 6205 3335

Action Officer: Erica Nixon, Head of Office Phone: MS TEAMS
Office of the Director-General

Attachments

Attachment	Title
Attachment 1	Cabinet Submission – Federation Funding Agreement – Medicare Urgent Care Clinics
Attachment A	Signed Federation Funding Agreement – Medicare Urgent Care Clinics
Attachment B	Open Access Decision Summary
Attachment C	Wellbeing Impact Assessment
Attachment D	Table of Comments
Attachment E	Communications Plan

Choose a Directorate:

To: Minister for Health

Tracking No.: MIN22/801

CC: Chief Minister

Emma Davidson, Minister for Disability

Kathy Leigh, Head of Service

Rebecca Cross, Director-General ACTHD

Dr Kerryn Coleman, Chief Health Officer

Dave Peffer, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services

Catherine Rule, Director-General, Community Services Directorate

Leesa Croke, Coordinator General COVID-19 (Non-Health)

From: Dr Robyn Walker, Executive Group Manager, COVID-19 Response

Subject: Influenza Vaccine delivery

Critical Date: 05/06/2022

Critical Reason: To support announcement and promotion of appointments from Monday 6 June

Recommendations

That you:

1. Note the increased pathways to receive influenza vaccination at both Access and Sensory clinic and Walk-in-Centres for Winter 2022 commencing 6 June 2022;

Noted / Please Discuss

2. Note the offer for ACT Government to primary care operators who support vulnerable community cohorts to provide free influenza vaccination; and

Noted / Please Discuss

3. Note the intended change to the minimum age for pharmacists to administer an influenza vaccine to five years.

Noted / Please Discuss

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA/...../.....

Minister's Office Feedback

Background

1. You have previously been briefed on options for an ACT Government 2022 Influenza vaccine program (Attachment A , Attachment B & Attachment C).
2. From 6 June 2022, it is proposed to commence delivery of influenza vaccination appointments at the Access and Sensory Clinic. Following closure of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) vaccination clinic, the Access and Sensory Clinic is extending its hours of operation from 2 to 3 days each week to help meet future demand. The increased demand is expected from free access to influenza vaccine plus the widening scope of the COVID-19 winter booster to people with disability with significant or complex health needs or multiple comorbidities which increase the risk of poor outcome from COVID-19.
3. Influenza vaccinations will also be offered opportunistically to patients attending the Walk-in-Centres (WiCs) for acute care needs. These vaccinations opportunities will not be publicly promoted to prevent overwhelming WiCs with patients. However, WiC nurses will actively offer opportunistic influenza vaccination to appropriate patients, where operational requirements permit.
4. To support community pharmacists to provide convenient additional influenza delivery the minimum age for pharmacists to administer an influenza vaccine will be reduced from 10 years to five years. This will support more families with primary school age children to access influenza vaccination together.

Issues

Access and Sensory Clinic

5. The ACT Government vaccine booking line began taking bookings at the Access and Sensory Clinic for the influenza vaccine from people living with disability, their carers and family members from 24 May 2022.

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6. Vaccination at the Access and Sensory Clinic is by appointment only. The appointment types can be for co-administration of COVID-19 and influenza vaccination, eligible COVID-19 vaccination or influenza vaccination only.
7. The Access and Sensory clinic will have capacity to accommodate up to 234 vaccination appointments (78 per day). As of 1 June, under current eligibility settings, less than half of clinic capacity is being utilised.
8. Therefore, in agreement with Canberra Health Services (CHS), the Access and Sensory clinic will increase influenza vaccine eligibility to concession card holders that are not otherwise eligible for a free influenza clinic under the National Immunisation Program from 6 June 2022. To be eligible, it is intended that the concession card is a Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card. However, evidence of concession cards will not be required.
9. The policy intention of delivery of influenza at the Access and Sensory is to be inclusive and support vulnerable and/or low-income community members to receive free vaccination during a challenging winter flu season. This will hopefully also assist by reducing hospital admissions from influenza, COVID-19 and other associated winter respiratory conditions.
10. To make an appointment for either a free COVID-19 or influenza vaccine, community members will book through the ACT COVID-19 vaccination line between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. The vaccination line is ready to accept bookings following the public announcement of this broadened eligibility.
11. To ensure that the integrity of the Access and Sensory Clinic remains appropriate for people with disability, mental health conditions, or those who require additional support to get their COVID-19 or influenza vaccinations; booking staff will carefully note any assistance required in the patient record.
12. The booking staff have noted that most individuals requiring vaccination support at Access and Sensory Clinic make appointments between 9-11.30am. Booking staff in conjunction with clinic nurses, will monitor requests and appointment timing closely to try and ensure that both the needs of disability patients are met, while also maximising appointment usage.

Walk-in-Centres

13. From 6 June 2022, all WiCs will offer opportunistic vaccination to suitable patients seeking acute care. The opportunistic vaccination will be subject to operational requirements including patient wait times and nursing workloads. It is not proposed to offer 'walk-in' vaccination only, nor specific appointments for influenza. This is given the high existing demand from patients seeking medical care at WiCs.

14. CHS will monitor the uptake of the influenza vaccination in WICs closely during first half of June, including nursing staff workload pressures. This will guide whether influenza vaccination delivery continues throughout Winter months and/or whether the delivery approach is adjusted etc.

Provision of Influenza to Vulnerable Community Providers

15. ACT Health is continuing to offer free influenza vaccine to community primary care providers who deliver healthcare and support to vulnerable populations.
16. Offers to supply and deliver free additional influenza vaccines have been made to Interchange Health Co-operative; Directions Health Services; Companion House and Winnunga. The Interchange Health Co-operative has accepted several hundred doses of influenza vaccination. The other providers are considering additional ways to liaise with their community members to increase influenza vaccination and will advise ACT Health accordingly.
17. ACT Health will continue to work with non-Government organisations and Community Services Directorate networks to offer free influenza vaccine doses for delivery.

Change to ACT Pharmacist Vaccination Standards

18. To encourage and support broader community delivery channels for influenza vaccination, the minimum age for pharmacists to administer an influenza vaccine will be reduced from 10 years to five years. To enable this change to occur, the Chief Health Officer will revoke the current *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods (Vaccinations by Pharmacists)* Direction (Disallowable instrument DI2021– 287) and make another. This is proposed to be signed and notified on the ACT Legislation Register on 6 June 2022. It is also proposed to advise Pharmacists that the change will come into effect 08 June 2022 (to allow for any slippages in this notification process).
19. ACT Health will work with Pharmacy stakeholders to support education and communication around this change of age for influenza vaccine delivery. A notable focus of education will be the requirement for children less than nine years of age to receive 2 influenza doses, 4 weeks apart, when receiving influenza vaccine for the first time.

Other Options

20. ACTHD will continue to explore other potential avenues for increasing the uptake of influenza vaccine amongst the most vulnerable members of the community and return with additional advice as appropriate.

Financial Implications

21. This submission does not have any direct funding impacts. The influenza vaccine stocks were the subject of a previous brief (Attachment A) and staff administration costs will be absorbed by current programs.

Consultation

Internal

22. DSD have provided input regarding booking team services and Information Technology (IT) systems at both WiCs and Access and Sensory clinic.

Cross Directorate

23. CHS provided operational information for this Brief and approved the contents.

External

24. Primary care providers (GPs) have been advised of the changes at Access and Sensory Clinic (including influenza delivery) through a letter from the ACT Chief Health Officer providing community updates and winter messages.

Work Health and Safety

25. Nil implications.

Benefits/Sensitivities

26. There may be some negative public criticism of a lack of free vaccine for all noting the stance taken by other jurisdictions.
27. Increasing influenza vaccination in vulnerable communities will assist to prevent flu infections and broader transmission. This may help prevent additional strain on the health system coincident with an expected wave of COVID-19.

Communications, media and engagement implications

28. There is a winter wellness communication campaign already in market that actively encourages all Canberrans to seek an influenza vaccination (in addition to their COVID-19 vaccinations). The campaign utilises above the line advertising channels and sharing of messages through direct stakeholder communication channels to target those Canberrans who are considered most vulnerable to severe outcomes from influenza.
29. The additional key messages required to encourage concession card holders to access free vaccinations will be incorporated into the winter wellness campaign with additional radio and digital advertising dedicated to promoting this initiative. This work is being undertaken collaboratively between the ACT Health and the COVID-19 Response Communication Teams.
30. A media release and talking points will be provided to your office to support this announcement.

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Signatory Name: Dr Robyn Walker, Executive Group Phone: (02) 5124 3330
Manager, COVID-19 Response

Action Officer: Charmaine Smith, Executive Branch Phone: (02) 5124 6394
Manager, COVID-19 Vaccination

Attachment	Title
Attachment A	Brief - Options for 2022 ACT Gov Influenza Vax Program
Attachment B	Brief - Influenza vaccine administration briefing
Attachment C	Brief ACT 2022 Influenza Vaccine Program - 30 May update



ACT Health Directorate

To:	Minister for Health	Tracking No.: MIN2024/00072
CC:	Dave Peffer, CEO, Canberra Health Services	
From:	Rebecca Cross, Director-General, ACT Health Directorate	
Subject:	Implementation of additional Medicare Urgent Care Clinics	
Critical Date:	06/02/2024	
Critical Reason:	To meet the timeframe for the submission of funding proposals to the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care	

Recommendations

That you:

1. Note the information contained in this brief; and

Noted / Please Discuss

2. Agree to seek the Chief Minister’s advice on providing a funding proposal to the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care to [REDACTED]

Agreed / Not Agreed / Please Discuss

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA/...../.....

Minister’s Office Feedback

Background

1. At National Cabinet on 6 December 2023, First Ministers agreed to a \$1.2 billion package of measures to relieve pressure on hospitals. The measures will grow and support Australia’s health workforce (via implementation of the Kruk Review), reduce

unnecessary presentations to emergency departments, and support faster transition of older patients to alternate care settings.

- 2. The package is a one-off investment of \$1.2 billion for up to four years, [REDACTED]
- 3. The package includes a measure to build on the successful implementation of the Medicare Urgent Care Clinic (UCC) Program. The number and location of additional Medicare UCCs will be determined by the Commonwealth in consultation with states and territories, informed by Emergency Department presentation pressures and local needs.
- 4. The establishment of any additional agreed Medicare UCCs is likely to commence from 2024-25.

Issues

- 5. The ACT has successfully implemented five UCCs, integrated across the existing nurse-led Walk-in Centres (WiCs) at Belconnen, Gungahlin, Dickson, Weston Creek and Tuggeranong.
- 6. As part of this current Commonwealth funding round, the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) proposes to submit a bid [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] would offer short term, episodic care for urgent conditions that are not immediately life threatening, with the aim of further reducing demand on the ACT's emergency departments.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[Redacted text block]

Financial Implications

[Redacted text block]

Consultation

Internal

17. Consultation was undertaken with the GP Liaison Unit (GPLU) and Policy, Partnerships and Programs division.

Cross Directorate

18. Consultation was undertaken with the Executive Director, Cancer and Ambulatory Services, Canberra Health Services. The Executive Director, who oversees the operation of the ACT's WiCs, is supportive of the proposal.

External

[Redacted text block]

Work Health and Safety

21. Nil

Benefits/Sensitivities

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

Communications, media and engagement implications

25. In the event the proposal is accepted by the Commonwealth, ACTHD will work with the Department of Health and Aged Care and your office to prepare communications materials.

Signatory Name: Rebecca Cross, Director-General Phone: 5124 9400

Action Officer: Robyn Hudson, Deputy Director-General, Policy and Transformation Phone: 5124 7976



ACT Health Directorate

To:	Minister for Health	Tracking No.: GBC23/499
CC:	Dave Peffer, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Health Services	
From:	Rebecca Cross, Director General	
Subject:	Urgent Care Clinics – Federation Funding Agreement – Health Schedule	
Critical Date:	21/08/2023	
Critical Reason:	To write to the Chief Minister seeking agreement to sign the Urgent Care Clinics Federation Funding Agreement by 23 August 2023.	

Recommendations

That you:

1. Sign the letter to the Chief Minister at Attachment A, seeking his agreement for you to sign the Federation Funding Agreement - Health Schedule – Medicare Urgent Care Clinics and to provide to Cabinet for noting on 11 September 2023.

Signed/ Not Signed / Please Discuss

Following Chief Minister's agreement:

1. Sign the response letter at Attachment B to the Australian Government Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Mark Butler MP; and

Signed / Not Signed / Please Discuss

2. Sign the Federation Funding Agreement - Health Schedule – Medicare Urgent Care Clinics at Attachment C.

Signed / Not Signed / Please Discuss

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA/...../.....

Minister's Office Feedback

Background

1. As part of the October 2022-23 and May 2023-24 Federal Budgets, the Australian Government announced \$493.5 million to establish 58 Medicare Urgent Care Clinics (UCCs) across Australia. One UCC was announced for the ACT as part of the 2022 Labor election campaign.
2. The aim of UCCs is *to reduce pressure on hospital emergency departments and make it easier for Australian families to see a doctor or a nurse when they require urgent but not life-threatening care.*
3. On 12 December 2022, the Hon Mark Butler MP wrote to you expressing support for ACT's proposed UCC model, although requested further information about *how GPs would be integrated into an environment that had been previously nurse-led.* You responded to Minister Butler on 10 January 2023 in support of further work between ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) and the Department of Health and Aged Care (Department) over details of the model.
4. The ACT UCC model initially comprised a system wide trial to integrate GPs and Consultant Medical Officers across all five ACT Walk in Centres (WICs), through a mix of face to face and telehealth consultations, to preserve and optimise the nurse-led WIC model.
5. The Department had originally allocated \$750,000 per annum for the ACT UCC. During bilateral negotiations, the Department offered the ACT additional funding of up to \$7M, supported by a 19(2) exemption under the *Health Insurance Act 1973* to enable approved providers to claim the MBS rebate from publicly funded WICs.

Issues

6. Consultation with key stakeholders led by Canberra Health Services (CHS) revealed strong sensitivities between medical and nursing representatives over the proposed UCC model. ACTHD has worked closely with your office and the Department to consider alternate models to resolve these concerns to ensure smooth and effective implementation.
7. On 31 May 2023, on advice from Minister Butler's office, the Department asked the ACT to consider an alternate model to extend Nurse Practitioner coverage across WIC sites in place of GPs, with consideration to extend radiology services at each WIC site through a potential outsourcing arrangement. Options for extended scope physiotherapists at WICs would also be considered.

8. On 9 June 2023, ACTHD presented an alternate model to this effect to the Department, at Attachment D. The model includes the following within the same funding envelope:
 - a. Additional nursing FTE,
 - i. 3.5 FTE Nurse Practitioners to enable coverage across all WICs across all hours of operation.
 - ii. 2.9 FTE Advance Practice Nurses to enhance coverage across all WICs and enhance training pathways across the Centres.
 - b. Additional allied health practitioners for Weston Creek WIC,
 - i. 0.8 FTE radiographer and 0.8 FTE sonographer to enable after hours medical imaging, and
 - ii. 1.8 FTE advanced scope physiotherapists to provide 'one stop' specialist musculoskeletal assessment, diagnosis, management and consultative services.
 - c. Additional equipment to facilitate point of care testing, diagnosis and treatment interventions, and
 - d. Additional FTE (0.7) to support new UCC data reporting to the Commonwealth.
9. On 26 June 2023, the Department responded in support of the proposed alternate model however requested assurances about the ACT's engagement with medical imaging providers proximate to WIC sites (other than Weston Creek) to provide imaging services to these sites.
10. A response was provided to the Department on 30 June 2023 proposing to use Weston Creek WIC for medical imaging as an immediate and interim solution to service the other WIC sites, with a commitment to undertake a formal tender process to service the other four WICs through external providers in the remainder of 2023.
11. [REDACTED]
12. The Department agreed to the proposal but noted that external providers are not easily accessible to the Inner North (Dickson) WIC, with the nearest provider being QScan Braddon. To address the Department's concerns, ACTHD and CHS are working on a solution that would see a mobile x-ray machine located at the Inner North WIC and operated by either a trained Nurse Practitioner (subject to approval under the *Radiation Protection Act 2006*) or an onsite radiographer.

13. On 16 August 2023, you received a letter from the Hon Mark Butler MP seeking your agreement to a Schedule for ACT UCCs based on the proposed alternate model, at Attachments C and E.
14. The Schedule provides Australian Government funding of \$7.1M to the ACT over three years from 2023/24.
15. A letter to the Chief Minister seeking his agreement for you to sign the Schedule is at Attachment A. The letter also proposes that the Schedule be provided to Cabinet for noting on 11 September 2023. To meet this timeframe, the Chief Minister's approval is being sought to bypass exposure draft circulation. Providing the Schedule to Cabinet for noting, rather than agreement will enable implementation of the UCCs, including processes to recruit clinical staff and procure medical imaging services, to commence in the coming weeks. This timeframe will also accommodate a joint media announcement with the Commonwealth in the week commencing 11 September 2023. The Chief Minister's signature on the letter is required by 23 August 2023 to ensure the 11 September 2023 Cabinet meeting date is met.
16. A draft letter of response to the Hon Mark Butler MP (Attachment B) and the copy of the Schedule (Attachment C) are provided for your signature.
17. ACTHD is working closely with CHS over implementation.

Financial Implications

18. Total value of this Schedule is \$7.097M, to be received over three financial years from 2023/24. These amounts were factored into the 2023-24 Budget released on 27 June 2023.
19. [REDACTED]

Consultation

Internal

20. Relevant teams within the Corporate and Governance and Policy, Partnerships and Programs Divisions have been consulted on the draft Schedule with comments addressed where appropriate.

Cross Directorate

21. The ACT Government Solicitor, Canberra Health Services and ACT Treasury have been consulted on the draft Schedule with comments addressed where appropriate.

External

22. The Schedule has been negotiated and agreed between ACTHD and the Department.

Work Health and Safety

23. Nil

Benefits/Sensitivities

24. The proposed ACT UCC investment leverages the success of the ACT WIC model to expand services across all five ACT WICs to relieve pressure on ACT Emergency Departments.
25. The extension of Nurse Practitioner staff across all Centres across all hours of operation, coupled with additional equipment and additional Advanced Practice Nurses, will expand service provision across all sites.
26. The advanced scope physiotherapist at Weston Creek WIC, coupled with onsite medical imaging services, will enable 'one-stop' diagnosis and treatment services for a range of musculoskeletal conditions not currently offered at WICs.
27. Weston Creek has capacity to accept imaging referrals from other WIC sites as an immediate and interim solution. Procurement of private imaging services closer to the other WICs, and use of a mobile x-ray machine at the Inner North WIC, will further enhance access for consumers in the future.
28. The ACT UCC investment is expected to both reduce the rate of redirections from ACT WICs and initial presentations to Emergency Departments.
29. The Department has confirmed it will advise medical stakeholders of its decision to proceed with a non-GP led model for the ACT and will manage sensitivities.

Communications, media and engagement implications

30. CHS will lead development of communications for UCCs and will work with the Department and your office to prepare a media release for this announcement.

Signatory Name: Rebecca Cross, Director General Phone:

Action Officer: Erica Nixon, Head of Office, Office of Phone: MS Teams
the Director General

Attachments

Attachment	Title
Attachment A	Letter to the Chief Minister
Attachment B	Response letter to the Australian Government Minister for Health and Aged Care
Attachment C	Federation Funding Agreement Health - Schedule Medicare Urgent Care Clinics
Attachment D	ACT Urgent Care Clinics – Alternate Model

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Attachment E	Letter of offer from the Australian Government Minister for Health and Aged Care
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ACT Health Directorate

To:	Minister for Health	Tracking No.: MIN22/1839
CC:	Dave Peffer, Chief Executive Officer Canberra Health Services Michael Culhane, A/g Deputy Director General	
From:	Rebecca Cross, Director General	
Subject:	Urgent Care Clinics - update and response to Minister Butler	
Critical Date:	10/01/2023	
Critical Reason:	To ensure a response to Minister Butler within standard response timeframes.	

Recommendation

That you sign the attached letter of response to Minister Butler (Attachment A).

Signed / Not Signed / Please Discuss

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA/...../.....

Minister's Office Feedback

Background

1. The Commonwealth October 2022 Budget includes \$235 million over four years from 2022-23 for Urgent Care Clinics (UCCs). Of this, \$135 million is to commence the rollout of at least 50 UCCs across states and territories. One UCC was announced for the ACT as part of the 2022 Labor election campaign.
2. Commonwealth officials originally indicated the ACT would be allocated \$750,000 per site per annum over three years from 2023-24, supplemented by the Medical Benefits Schedule (MBS) rebate for GPs under a 19(2)¹ exemption.
3. The aim of UCCs (according to the Budget paper) is to *reduce pressure on hospital emergency departments and make it easier for Australian families to see a doctor or a nurse when they require urgent but not life-threatening care*. All UCCs will be open during extended business hours with no appointments required and will ensure that patients do not have out-of-pocket costs.
4. The remaining \$100 million over two years from 2022–23 has been allocated to *co-develop and pilot innovative models with states and territories to improve care pathways and inform program roll-out*. This funding is being progressed separately through the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in collaboration with states and territories.
5. On 13 September 2022, ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) submitted its UCC proposal to the Department of Health and Aged Care (Department). This proposed to run a system wide trial comprising a combination of face-to-face and telehealth services across all five ACT Walk in Centres (WICs), delivered by a mix of GPs and Consultant Medical Officers (CMOs). The model would preserve and optimise the current nurse-led WIC model, with referral to a GP or CMO only after initial triage. An additional \$750,000 per annum was requested to support the proposed system wide trial, which could be operational from 2023.
6. The ACT is represented on a multilateral UCC Senior Officials Advisory Group (SOAG) led by the Department, alongside subordinate working groups to develop the UCC Operational Guidance and a data and evaluation framework, respectively.
7. At the 14 December 2022 Health Ministers' Meeting, Ministers noted that the SOAG had endorsed the UCC Operational Guidance and the proposed approach to UCC evaluation, including key outcomes or goals and measures of success.

¹ All states and the Northern Territory that have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Australian Government for the COAG Section 19(2) Exemptions Initiative authorising MBS bulk-billing for people provided with eligible services at an approved eligible rural and remote location. The ACT does not qualify for the Initiative as it does not include any rural or remote regions.

Issues

8. On 13 December 2022, you received a letter from The Hon Mark Butler, Minister for Health and Aged Care. The letter expressed in principle support for the ACT's proposed system wide trial, subject to further negotiation by officials over the model. Minister Butler stressed the importance of working through logistics around potential telehealth support and how GPs could be integrated into a nurse-led environment. He also expressed support for funding to be directed to ACT Government (as opposed to through a Primary Health Network, as is the case in other jurisdictions) and agreed to departments negotiating a Federation Funding Agreement (FFA) for this purpose.
9. A bilateral meeting with the Department has been scheduled for 18 January 2023 to negotiate details of the ACT UCC model and funding.
10. A response to Minister Butler has been prepared at Attachment A for your signature. The draft letter highlights existing ACT investment in ACT WIC infrastructure and the importance of the Commonwealth granting a section 19(2) exemption to support this model.
11. ACTHD will continue to work with the Department through the SOAG and bilateral negotiations. You will be briefed in 2023 regarding outcomes of bilateral negotiations and process for signing the FFA.
12. At the last SOAG meeting of 16 December 2022, the Group considered future governance arrangements for UCCs. It is currently proposed to have a three-tiered structure comprising a Steering Committee, Operational Advisory Group and Community of Practice. This was generally supported by jurisdictions noting that matters relating to data and evaluation still need to be worked through and that responsibility for evaluation should be kept separate from the Advisory Group.

Financial Implications

13. Total anticipated funding from this FFA is up to \$4.5million delivered over three to four financial years.
14. The ACT proposal included that Commonwealth funds be paid to Canberra Health Services.
15. The Commonwealth has not sought the ACT to match funding at this stage, noting the ACT already funds substantial fixed costs at the existing WIC sites.
16. Funding is expected to become a new Schedule under the FFA -Health.

Consultation

Internal

17. Policy, Partnerships and Programs and Strategic Finance have reviewed this advice.

Cross Directorate

18. The Chief Operating Officer, Canberra Health Services has reviewed this advice.

External

19. Nil for this advice.

20. ACTHD will work closely with Capital Health Network during negotiations and implementation.

21. ACT will consult with health services, unions, professional bodies and GP representatives before finalising details of the proposed arrangements.

Work Health and Safety

22. Nil.

Benefits/Sensitivities

23. Concerns may be raised that the ACT model erodes the nurse-led WIC model by integrating a GP. Clear messaging will be provided on rollout to highlight that ACT UCCs preserve and optimise the nurse-led WIC model.

24. ACTHD will work with the Department to ensure best approach to UCC branding, to avoid confusion in the community.

Communications, media and engagement implications

25. Nil at this stage

Signatory Name: Rebecca Cross, Director General Phone: 5124 9400

Action Officer: Vivien Bevan, Head of Office, Office Phone: 5124 7894
of the Director General

Attachments

Attachment	Title
Attachment A	Draft response to Minister Butler