

Hansard

Question to Minister for Health

12 October 2010

Dr M.D. NAHAN to the Minister for Mental Health:

Mr Speaker, my question is to Western Australia's first minister for mineral health. Minister, I am proud to be in a government that has over the last two years invested heavily —

Mr M.P. Whitely: Mineral health?

The SPEAKER: Member, take a seat. Member for Bassendean, I was trying to hint to you subtly before that maybe you should keep quiet for a while. I am formally going to call you for the first time today.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Minister, I am proud to be part of a government that has over the last two years invested heavily in improving mental health services and has delivered, amongst other things, the state's first dedicated mental health minister, the first dedicated Mental Health Commission, the first for-purpose ring-fenced mental health budget —

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: This is a serious issue.

Several members interjected.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: A serious initiative.

Mr T.G. Stephens: You'll get chucked out for breaking standing orders.

The SPEAKER: Take a seat. Member for Pilbara, I formally call you to order for the first time today.

Mr T.G. Stephens interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Pilbara, I do not need to hear any further comment. Members, if you want questions asked in this place, there is a process that you need to follow, and continual interjection, as I have said on many occasions, prevents that from happening.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: There is also a new suicide prevention strategy and many new facilities, including at Princess Margaret Hospital, Murdoch University, East Perth and Narrogin. The minister will be aware that mental health issues account for 55 per cent of ill health .

Mr T.G. Stephens: This is two minutes into your preamble!

The SPEAKER: Take a seat, member for Riverton. Members, I keep hearing in this place that you would like more questions asked.

Mr T.G. Stephens: He hasn't asked one.

Mr P. Papalia: He hasn't started to ask one.

The SPEAKER: I formally call you to order for the first time.
An opposition member interjected: Who?

The SPEAKER: The member knows who I am talking about and he needs —
A member interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member! Member for Pilbara, I formally call you to order for the second time today. Members, if you want question time to proceed from this point, you will desist from interjecting.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Will the minister inform the house of this government's most recent investment in adolescent mental health services?

Dr G.G. JACOBS replied:

I thank the member for Riverton for his compassion and his advocacy in the area of, particularly, child and adolescent mental health. Unfortunately, one in four young Western Australians experience some form of mental health problem in the year. That is a significant statistic, and it is a concern.

Fifty-five per cent of those suffering mental illness in the community—over half, if members like—are young people aged 15 to 24 years old. The major conditions are depression, anxiety and the consequences of substance misuse and abuse. It is important that we support young people, particularly by early intervention in mental illness. Yesterday, I had the pleasure, and I believe the deputy leader also made a visit, to announce at the Bentley mental health facility a families at work program and a \$100 000—

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: A \$100 000 refurbishment, member for Bassendean, that goes to —

Mr M.P. Whitely interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: That refurbishment goes to improving the facility and delivering services for young people who suffer from some form of mental illness.
Several members interjected.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: The families at work program is a statewide service for young people between the ages of eight and 13 who have social, emotional and behavioural and mental illness problems. The upgrade to the unit and the redevelopment of the program means that both residential and day services can be offered, and there is a classroom attached to the families at work unit—an important opportunity for young people in the facility to attend school while they are on the program.

Young people will be able to attend the program during the day and go home to their families at night, which is an additional option that was previously unavailable. The member for Bassendean knows that it has always been there, but basically we are improving both inpatient and residential in-reach services for young people. The Families at Work program is offered in conjunction with the Department of Education's Hospital School Services. I congratulate the Minister for Education for her involvement in those services for that facility.

While I was at the complex, I announced a further \$337 000 investment in the refurbishment of the Bentley adolescent unit, with improved staff training and increased focus on discharge planning in addition to the refurbishment. As members will know, the Bentley adolescent unit is an authorised child and adolescent inpatient mental health facility in Western Australia. It was built 14 years ago.

This investment will make it more contemporary, more liveable and more functional for young people who are patients, for their families and for staff. The funding will also enable 25 child and adolescent mental health service staff to participate in a one-day training program conducted by Professor Patrick McGorry's Orygen Youth Health organisation, which will be held towards the end of this month.

The Bentley adolescent unit will work with the Mental Health Commission to customise support services to better individualise the needs of young people. It is an important step in developing improved recovery coordination for young people with a mental illness. We would all know a friend, a work colleague or a relative who has a child with a mental illness. It is about delivering hope, success, recovery and functional lives for young people in Western Australia.