

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Inquiry into Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Spoken Question on Notice, 28 September 2021

PDR Number: IQ21-000255

Occupancy of ICU beds during the national rollout strategy

Spoken

Senator: Katy Gallagher

Question:

Dr Murphy: I understand that. We have a great deal of sympathy for you on that.

CHAIR: That's okay. I don't need sympathy, but I've got a good line of sight on what's happening in the community.

Dr Murphy: I don't want to give exact numbers until the states and territories are happy with their own individual numbers, but, at an aggregate level, we're comfortable that with the various mitigations proposed in phase B, with the ability to tailor the testing, tracing and quarantine and with the public health and social measures at that vaccination rate we'll be able to control outbreaks. We are already seeing evidence of that in New South Wales.

CHAIR: Have you provided a figure around bed occupancy to the government under the national plan? Because it is pretty important.

Dr Murphy: Yes, we have provided aggregate likely bed occupancy, but that's being refined at a state and territory level.

CHAIR: Okay, well I'm asking: what is the likely bed occupancy that you have provided? I'm not asking about the stuff the states and territories are refining. I'd like to know: what is that figure that you have provided to the government?

Dr Murphy: That's part of the national cabinet considerations at the moment. We can take that on notice.

Answer:

As at 24 September 2021, the planned national ICU capacity for COVID-19 patients under a surge scenario was 2,603 ICU beds.

As at 24 September 2021, the planned national ICU capacity for COVID-19 patients under a living with COVID-19 scenario was 317 ICU beds.

Modelling by jurisdiction was published by the Department of Health on 12 November, with detailed bed capacities. This is available at:

www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/doherty-institute-modelling-by-jurisdiction-sizes.