

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Community Affairs

Effective approaches to prevention, diagnosis and support for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

19 May 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000236

Question Subject: Diagnostic criteria for FASD

Type of Question: Spoken

Hansard Page number: 5

Senator: Stirling Griff

Question

Senator GRIFF: Will there be a move to change the diagnostic criteria to focus more on the spectrum of disability rather than stick to what some submitters see as being the strict criteria that currently exist?

Ms Appleyard: That is my understanding. I don't have a particularly detailed knowledge of the diagnostic tool myself. I must apologise for that as I have only fairly recently started in this job, but I could provide you with some more detail on that on notice. But that is certainly my understanding, because there really isn't any point having a diagnostic tool if it's going to limit you or it's going to be not inclusive of the range of learnings that we have had in relation to FASD. It is going to be aligning with international best practice. My understanding is it would be informed by much more recent evidence.

Answer:

In November 2019 the Department advertised a grant opportunity to review the FASD Diagnostic Tool. Applications closed in February 2020 and the Department is currently working through the Community Grants Hub within the Department of Social Services to progress this activity through the offer a funding agreement. The scope of this project includes a review to identify opportunities to improve the FASD Diagnostic Tool and the Australian Guide to the Diagnosis of FASD. The review will ensure the tool and the guide align with current scientific, clinical and international standards of best practice in FASD diagnosis.

Separately, in 2019-20 the Government, through the National Health and Medical Research Council, funded Griffith University to test a tiered approach to the diagnosis of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in remote Indigenous primary care settings. The aim of this research is to determine whether an abbreviated diagnostic process can accurately diagnose FASD in a remote Indigenous setting where there is limited access to specialist services required to diagnose FASD. This abbreviated protocol will be considered through the review of the diagnostic tool however, results from this research will not be fully available until mid-2024.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Community Affairs

Effective approaches to prevention, diagnosis and support for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

19 May 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000238

Question Subject: Education and public awareness of FASD

Type of Question: Spoken

Hansard Page number: 8

Senator: Anne Urquhart

Question

Senator URQUHART: That would be great. My last question is about education and public awareness. What sort of information about FASD is put into the school curriculum, particularly in secondary schools?

Ms Appleyard: I do apologise. I don't have that information with me.

Senator URQUHART: If you'd like to take it on notice, that's fine.

Ms Appleyard: Sure.

Answer:

The Department is unable to provide advice on how FASD is incorporated into school curriculums and refers the Senator to the Department of Education.

In November 2019, as part of the Department of Health's role in implementing the FASD Strategic Action Plan, a grant opportunity was released to develop resources in teacher and educational settings. Applications for this grant opportunity closed on 3 February 2020. The successful applicant has been notified and the Department is working with the Department of Social Services to offer a funding agreement.

The aim of this activity is to improve access to high-quality education for students with FASD by providing educators and mentors with guidance materials, tools and templates to assist them to help students with FASD.

The program will include:

- a review of current resources within the education sector in relation to providing education and mentoring to students with FASD. The review will determine gaps, strengths and weaknesses in existing Australian materials, and conduct an assessment of international resources (such as tools and templates) to determine if any would be beneficial to the Australian education workforce;
- updating and/or developing evidence-based national resources (such as useful guidance materials, online workshops, tools and templates);
- creating new resources that improve the capacity of teachers and educational support staff to encourage greater participation of people with FASD in education settings and that align with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers; and
- build the capacity of the education workforce and provide the education workforce with strategies to engage with children who potentially have FASD and their parents/carers.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Community Affairs

Senate Inquiry into the effective approaches to prevention, diagnosis and support for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

19 May 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000259

Question Subject: FASD provision of services

Type of Question: Written

Senator: Stirling Griff

Question

FASD is not included on the Australian Government's List of Recognised Disabilities. How does this affect the provision of services and access to support for people with FASD?

Answer:

The Department refers the Senator to the Department of Social Services and the National Disability Insurance Agency for information regarding FASD's inclusion to or exclusion from the Australian Government's List of Recognised Disabilities.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Community Affairs

Effective approaches to prevention, diagnosis and support for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

19 May 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000261

Question Subject: My Health Record and maternal consumption of alcohol

Type of Question: Written

Senator : Stirling Griff

Question

Given the difficulty of securing diagnosis in the absence of any record of maternal alcohol consumption (for example, for some children in care), would it be appropriate to include maternal consumption of alcohol on a child's My Health Record? (Or otherwise, provide access to a mother's MHR for children in care or where it is difficult to obtain this information from a parent directly, in order to diagnose a child for FASD?)

Answer:

The *My Health Records Act 2012* provides authority for a registered healthcare provider to include in a person's My Health Record health information about another person (a third party) if it is directly relevant to the healthcare of the first person.

In the given scenario it would be up to the healthcare provider to determine whether maternal alcohol consumption is directly relevant to the healthcare of the child in order to decide whether to include it in the child's My Health Record.

In terms of accessing a mother's My Health Record to provide healthcare to a child, a healthcare provider could only access the mother's My Health Record with the mother's consent.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Community Affairs

Senate Inquiry into Effective approaches to prevention, diagnosis and support for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

19 May 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000262

Question Subject: Review of the Australian Guide to the Diagnosis of FASD

Type of Question: Written

Senator: Stirling Griff

Question

According to the National FASD Strategic Action Plan 2018-2028, a key objective is to Review the Australian Guide to the Diagnosis of FASD (p23). Who will conduct the review? When is this review expected to be completed?

Answer:

In November 2019 the Department advertised a grant opportunity to review the FASD Diagnostic Tool. Applications closed in February 2020 and the Department is currently working through the Community Grants Hub within the Department of Social Services to progress this activity through the offer a funding agreement.

The scope of this project includes a review to identify opportunities to improve the FASD Diagnostic Tool and the Australian Guide to the Diagnosis of FASD. The review will ensure the tool and the guide align with current scientific, clinical and international standards of best practice in FASD diagnosis.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Community Affairs

Senate Inquiry into Effective approaches to prevention, diagnosis and support for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

19 May 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000263

Question Subject: FASD Strategic Action Plan formal 3-year review

Type of Question: Written

Senator: Stirling Griff

Question

The National FASD Strategic Action Plan also states 'there is an expectation' that the National FASD Plan will be formally reviewed after a 3 year period (p43 of the plan). Is that still intended? If so, when will that formal process begin?

Answer:

The Strategic Action Plan will be first reviewed at the three year point. This review is expected to be completed in December 2021 and will be led by the FASD Advisory Group which reports to the National Drug Strategy Committee.