
MEDIA RELEASE

16 September 2024

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ACT political parties must commit to investigate nurse-led clinics bleeding taxpayers' money

Canberra's nurse-led walk-in clinics are bleeding taxpayers' money and their ability to provide the care people need is under question, prompting the RACGP to call on political parties to commit to a thorough review of the clinics.

A recent report [in the Canberra Times](#) highlighted the ACT Government has grossly underestimated costs to attend nurse-led clinics, with the average charge of \$194 almost doubling the originally estimated \$110 fee.

The Royal Australian College of GPs (RACGP) NSW&ACT Chair Dr Rebekah Hoffman said: "The ACT's nurse-led walk-in clinics are bleeding taxpayers' money – cost-per-service is up to five times more than to see a GP.

"Despite these high costs, we don't even know if Canberrans are getting the care they need from these clinics.

"A *Canberra Times* investigation found officials are not measuring the number of patients who need to be re-directed to emergency departments or GPs, because they can't get the care they need at the clinic.

"Canberrans are paying through the nose for these clinics, yet we don't know if they're working, it's outrageous. The next ACT Government must conduct a thorough review of these clinics, including how much they're costing taxpayers, and if patients are actually getting the care they need, or having to go somewhere else.

"There is no substitute for the quality care you get from a GP who knows you, and your history, and cares for you over the years. And general practices have always provided urgent care and kept appointments for people with issues that need to be seen to on the same day.

"Rather than supporting existing general practice care for Canberrans, the ACT Government has instead been spending millions creating new walk-in clinics, which has merely duplicated services – can anyone say this is a good use of public funds?

"It has fragmented care for patients, which can lead to inappropriate treatments and prescribing, and missed diagnosis.

"And it has done nothing to ease the pressure on Canberra's hospitals – ACT Health's annual report for 2022-23 shows wait times in emergency departments have deteriorated.

"The next ACT Government must conduct a thorough investigation of Canberra's nurse-led walk-in clinics – Canberrans deserve to know the truth about what value if any they are providing.

"And I look forward to meeting with the next government to talk about real solutions to improve access to essential general practice care in the ACT – this is the best way to help people stay healthy, and out of hospital."

~ENDS

RACGP spokespeople are available for interviews: [03 8699 0992](tel:0386990992) / media@racgp.org.au.

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About the RACGP

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) is the peak representative organisation for general practice, the backbone of Australia's health system. We set the standards for general practice, facilitate lifelong learning for GPs, connect the general practice community, and advocate for better health and wellbeing for all Australians.

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