

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMICS

### REVIEW OF THE FOUR MAJOR BANKS AND OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS INSURANCE SECTOR

#### ClearView Life

#### CLV05QON:

**CHAIR:** Taking off my hat as chair of the economics committee, I'm also Chair of the Parliamentary Friends for Action on HIV/AIDS, Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmitted Infections, and it was brought to my attention recently that HIV-positive Australians aren't eligible for life insurance, even though all the treatment options would now make it completely unjustifiable to deny it. I'm just wondering whether that is the case or not for a life insurance product.

**Mr Clark:** I would have to check that. There has been a lot of evolution of underwriting processes in relation to a whole host of medical conditions in recent years. As the medical profession gets better at dealing with medical issues and as the insurance industry assesses those treatment options, underwriting approaches change all the time. I'd have to check exactly, more broadly, where we are around HIV conditions.

**CHAIR:** That would be good. The average life expectancy of somebody who is HIV-positive is now exactly the same, basically, as that of any other member of the community, thanks to the wonders of modern medicine and treatment options. But my understanding is that some products are still denied to people. You make a point about underwriting, but it sounds to me like that may not be reflecting contemporary practice. I would appreciate if you'd look at that. Mr Swanson?

**Mr Swanson:** Yes, I'd have to check that too, but I would say that, in a number of instances, I'm aware of people who have been able to get what are called limited-duration covers. Instead of having it to the age of 65, as an example, it's for the next 15 years. But I'd need to come back to you with specific details.

**CHAIR:** So both of you will effectively take that on notice.

**Mr Swanson:** Yes.

#### Answer:

HIV positive customers are eligible for life insurance cover, that is they are not expressly excluded from cover. For the purposes of life insurance HIV is assessed much like any other long term chronic illness and the outcome of underwriting will vary depending on the age of the customer, present health, compliance with treatment requirements and response to treatment.