

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Hearing Health and Wellbeing in Australia

3 March 2017

Question no: 1

Topic: MBS listings for genetic testing for hearing loss (relating to the response to Question on Notice no.3 from the public hearing on 3 March 2017).

Type of Question: written

Senator: Mr Zimmerman

Question:

What genetic testing for hearing loss is currently listed on the Medicare Benefits Schedule?

There is no genetic testing listed on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) for hearing loss.

There are currently two items listed on the MBS which are used in the diagnosis of constitutional genetic abnormalities, where hearing loss may feature as part of the genetic condition or syndrome being considered. These items are listed in the below table.

| PATHOLOGY | PATHOLOGY |
|-----------|---|
| | GROUP P7 - GENETICS |
| 73291 | <p>Analysis of one or more chromosome regions for specific constitutional genetic abnormalities of blood or fresh tissue in</p> <p>a) diagnostic studies of a person with developmental delay, intellectual disability, autism, or at least two congenital abnormalities, in whom cytogenetic studies (item 73287 or 73289) are either normal or have not been performed; or</p> <p>b) studies of a relative for an abnormality previously identified in such an affected person. – 1 or more tests.</p> <p>Fee: \$230.95 Benefit: 75% = \$173.25 85% = \$196.35</p> |
| 73292 | <p>Analysis of chromosomes by genome-wide micro-array including targeted assessment of specific regions for constitutional genetic abnormalities in diagnostic studies of a person with developmental delay, intellectual disability, autism, or at least two congenital abnormalities (including a service in items 73287, 73289 or 73291, if performed) – 1 or more tests.</p> <p>Fee: \$589.90 Benefit: 75% = \$442.45 85% = \$509.70</p> |

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3 March 2017

Question no: 2

Topic: Commissions in the audiology industry (relating to the response to Question on Notice no.4 from the public hearing on 3 March 2017).

Type of Question: written

Senator: Mr Zimmerman

Question:

Following the release of the ACCC's report, *Issues around the Sale of Hearing Aids*, has the Office of Hearing Services undertaken any investigations into the use of commissions and other sales incentives in the audiology industry? If so, what actions have been taken?

Answer:

The Office of Hearing Services (OHS) has not undertaken any generic audiology industry investigations into the use of commissions and other sales incentives. The OHS does however monitor claiming data, recovers funds relating to over claiming and responds to complaints as they relate to the Hearing Services Program and the contractual obligations of contracted service providers.

See further answer to question 3.

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HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Hearing Health and Wellbeing in Australia

3 March 2017

Question no: 3

Topic: Commissions in the audiology industry (relating to the response to Question on Notice no.4 from the public hearing on 3 March 2017).

Type of Question: written

Senator: Mr Zimmerman

Question:

The Department states that ‘allegations of inappropriate selling pressure within the Program are investigated by the Office of Hearing Services and appropriate action taken, including suspension or termination of a service provider’s contract’. How many investigations of this type has the Office of Hearing Services undertaken in the last five years and what have been the results of these investigations?

Answer:

Since 17 February 2014, the Office of Hearing Services has received 20 complaints that relate to selling pressure. All complaints were investigated and resolved without requiring compliance action.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Hearing Health and Wellbeing in Australia

3 March 2017

Question no: 4

Topic: Use of the Know Your Noise website (relating to the response to Question no.4 of the written questions following the public hearing on 3 March 2017)

Type of Question: written

Senator: Mr Zimmerman

Question:

Have you undertaken any reporting on how often the Know Your Noise website is being accessed and used? If so, what were the results?

Answer:

The Know Your Noise website is an initiative of the National Acoustic Laboratories (NAL), the research division of Australian Hearing (AH). NAL reports on the use of the website to AH quarterly.

Since it was launched in November 2014, the site has had over 70,000 users visiting for a total of 86,000 'sessions'. Over 13,000 of these sessions were of at least three minutes' duration, equating to 466 sessions per month to February 2017.