

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 16 FEBRUARY 2012 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Medical Information Files

Question reference number: HSW 68

Senator: Fifield

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 29 March 2012

Number of pages: 1

Question:

- a) What access restrictions are placed on a person's confidential medical file held on the Centrelink database?
- b) What recourse does a client have if they suspect their file has been used improperly?
- c) Can a client request that their medical data be removed from their file?

Answer:

- a) Department of Human Services (DHS) staff can access medical information as part of their duties. The storage and security of personal information is maintained in accordance with Information Privacy Principle 4.
Information is clearly labelled and a warning prevents accidental access and reminds staff of inappropriate access to medical information. All access to customer information is logged and recorded.
- b) All customers may lodge a complaint with DHS if they believe their information has been used improperly. A person can contact DHS:
 - by letter (mail, email or fax);
 - on a specific customer complaint form;
 - verbally (in person or over the telephone);
 - through customer feedback forms; or
 - via a ministerial or Freedom of Information request.
- c) No.