

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30/31 May 2011

Question: E11-025

OUTCOME 5: Primary Care

Topic: MEDICARE LOCALS FUND

Written Question on Notice

Senator Siewert asked:

The 2011 budget made reference to Medicare Locals Fund (p.212 yellow budget papers),

- a) Can the Department tell us which programs are being consolidated into this fund?
- b) Is there going to be some sort of population health planning involved when Medicare Locals start to deliver `a range of initiatives including after-hours general practice services, rural primary health services, workforce support for rural GPs and support for aged care recipients to access general practice and allied health services?  
(page 212, yellow papers)
- c) If so, does the Department believe there is sufficient data to enable Medicare Locals to deliver on population health planning?

Answer:

- a) The following programs will be consolidated into the Regionally Tailored Primary Health Care Initiatives through Medicare Locals Fund:
  - 1. Primary Health Care Organisation Support – Improving Access to General Practice and Primary Health Care Services for Older Australians;
  - 2. Primary Health Care Organisations – Medicare Locals;
  - 3. Improve Access to After-hours Care: Funding to Medicare Locals to ensure availability of face-to-face after hours services;
  - 4. General Practice After Hours Program;
  - 5. Workforce Support for Rural GPs Program;
  - 6. Rural GP Locum Program; and
  - 7. Rural Primary Health Services Program.
- b) Consistent with the *Medicare Locals Guidelines for the establishment and initial operation of Medicare Locals*, a key objective of Medicare Locals is to identify the health needs of local areas and develop locally focused and responsive services.
- c) Yes. Medicare Locals will have access to a wide range of demographic and services utilisation data.