

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 30 & 31 May and 1 June 2012

Question: E12-015

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: Hand Hygiene

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 2

Senator: Senator Boyce

Question:

Information on hand hygiene in public hospitals has been made available, on the MyHospitals website

The website uses an interim national benchmark of 70% to present how often hand hygiene is correctly performed. The benchmark has been set by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

Across 233 major public hospitals, about half were above the national benchmark, just over 30% were similar to the benchmark and almost 19% were below the benchmark.

As good hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways to minimise the risk of healthcare associated infections such as 'golden staph' what steps is the Commission taking to improve hand hygiene in public hospitals?

Answer:

In March 2008 the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care contracted Austin Health to undertake the National Hand Hygiene Initiative (NHHI). The NHHI is working to develop a national hand hygiene culture-change program that will standardise hand hygiene practice and placement of alcohol-based hand rub in every Australian hospital.

The NHHI has resulted in a successful national roll-out of a standardised, validated culture-change program among Australian healthcare workers resulting in marked improvements in hand hygiene compliance in 629 Australian hospitals.

Since data was first collected in 2009, the national compliance rate for hand hygiene has risen from 64% to 73% in 2012.

Over 300,000 health care staff have undertaken education and training in hand hygiene.

The Commission has signed with NHHI to undertake further work in 2012-13 working within the following key areas:

- National hand hygiene data standardisation and validity;
- National hand hygiene database, analysis and efficiency.
- National hand hygiene education resource and credentialing.
- Private sector hand hygiene support and coordination.
- Research and development.

Along with the above areas of work, the program will also target specific areas such as university nursing courses and development of online education modules for trainee surgeons.