

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: E12-017

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: Diabetes and Mental Illness

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Senator: Senator Boyce

Question:

There are 1.7 million Australians with diabetes and it is estimated that there are approximately 700,000 Australians with undiagnosed diabetes. Given that further complications frequently arise with undiagnosed diabetes, what programs does the Government have in place to alert people to the possibility of diabetes?

Answer:

The Australian Government provides specific Medical Benefits Schedule (MBS) items for medical practitioners (including general practitioners, but not including specialists or consultant physicians) to undertake health assessments for patients at risk of developing type 2 diabetes, as well as health assessments for people at risk of developing a chronic disease such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Funding has been provided for the development of the Australian Type 2 Diabetes Risk Assessment Tool (AUSDRISK), which enables individuals to assess their risk of contracting the disease by completing a ten step questionnaire. The AUSDRISK tool can be accessed from the Department's website and is explained on key stakeholder websites, including Diabetes Australia and the Royal Australasian College of General Practitioners.

The Government is also funding the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package (ICDP) as its contribution to the National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Outcomes. The ICDP aims to close the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by tackling chronic disease risk factors, improving diagnosis, chronic disease management and follow-up in primary care, and increasing the capacity of the primary care workforce to deliver effective health care to Indigenous Australians. Initiatives within the ICDP are increasing the uptake of MBS health assessments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over, which will assist in detecting and managing diabetes.

In addition, the Government has committed \$872.1 million over six years (from 2009-10) under the COAG National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health (NPAPH). The NPAPH seeks to address the rising prevalence of lifestyle related chronic disease, including type 2 diabetes, by laying the foundations for healthy behaviours in the daily lives of Australians through settings such as communities, early childhood education and care environments, schools and workplaces, supported by national social marketing campaigns (Measure Up, Swap It, and an anti-smoking campaign).

A key element of the NPAPH involved the establishment of a new Australian National Preventive Health Agency (ANPHA). The Agency commenced operations in early 2011, with an initial focus on obesity, alcohol and tobacco use.