

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: E12-180

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) program

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 2

Senator: Senator Wright

Question:

- a) Are ATAPS services largely being delivered under sub-contract arrangements from Medicare Locals or Divisions of General Practice?
- b) If so, what proportion of ATAPS services are provided by Medicare Locals and Divisions of General Practice?
- c) How is the remaining percentages of ATAPS services being provided?
- d) What form of quality control is in place where ATAPS services are subcontracted to Medicare Locals and Divisions of General Practice?
- e) Has the Department established clinical guidelines and provided training for subcontractors offering services under ATAPS?

Answer:

a) to c)

Medicare Locals are funded, through a Schedule under a Deed for Funding with the Department of Health and Ageing, to deliver the Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) program within their region.

Medicare Locals may use a range of delivery models, which include:

- direct employment where the Medicare Local employs ATAPS mental health professionals who then deliver ATAPS services to clients;
- subcontracting directly to ATAPS mental health professionals who invoice the Medicare Local for ATAPS sessions delivered;
- subcontracting to an organisation who employs ATAPS mental health professionals who deliver ATAPS services to clients; and
- a blended model combining some or all of the above.

- d) Medicare Locals are required under their funding agreement with the Department to ensure the provision of services complies with the ATAPS Operational Guidelines and that the mental health professionals delivering services have the required qualifications. Medicare Locals are also required to have appropriate clinical governance arrangements.
- e) The Department has not established clinical guidelines under the ATAPS program, but has developed and circulated the following guidelines and guidance for Medicare Locals:
- ATAPS Operational Guidelines, with the following annexures:
 - ATAPS Suicide Prevention Service Operational Guidelines;
 - Draft ATAPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health Service Operational Guidelines;
 - Draft ATAPS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Service Operational Guidelines; and
 - Draft ATAPS Child Mental Health Service Operational Guidelines.
 - Draft ATAPS Child Mental Health Service Purchasing Guidance.

Those documents that are currently in draft form are expected to be finalised by early 2013 following stakeholder consultation and feedback.

The Department has provided funding for the development and delivery of training for ATAPS mental health professionals delivering:

- suicide prevention services (on-line training modules); and
- Indigenous suicide prevention services in the Kimberley region (on-line training modules).

The Department will fund the development and delivery of further training for ATAPS mental health professionals providing child mental health services, and will also fund the rollout of cultural competency training to up-skill the non-Indigenous ATAPS workforce.