

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: E12-220

OUTCOME 3: Access to Medical Services

Topic: Medicare Benefits - Reviews

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Senator: Senator Fierravanti-Wells

Question:

Could you take on notice what level of consultation there was with patient and consumer groups? Perhaps you might give me some examples from some of the reviews that have occurred and what proportion of existing items on the MBS have been reviewed or are intended to be reviewed?

Answer:

The Comprehensive Management Framework for the Medical Benefits Scheme (MBS) (CMFM) announced in the 2011-12 Budget, establishes processes initiated under the 2009-10 Budget's Quality Framework for the MBS to systematically review existing MBS items for quality, safety and effectiveness.

Stakeholder and public consultations is a major component of the review process and all stakeholders, including medical and health professionals, craft groups, patients and consumer groups will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the review reports at various stages of the review process. The Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) will be formally invited to provide comment during each review process. The consultation process will seek comment on the scope and methodology for the reviews and feedback will be valuable in informing the final report.

Under the MBS Quality Framework, four demonstration reviews were undertaken and included the following MBS services: ophthalmology, surgery for the treatment of obesity, colonoscopy, and pulmonary artery catheterisation. These reviews included consultation with the stakeholders through a public consultation process. The CHF were involved in providing comment on the draft protocols and the draft review reports for each of these reviews.

In December 2011, the Minister for Health approved 11 rapid reviews and five specialty reviews of the MBS services under the CMFM. The rapid reviews include 78 of the 6,000 MBS items listed and include: wrist ganglia, diagnostic knee arthroscopy, varicose veins, lipectomy, rhinoplasty, vulvoplasty, botulinum toxin, cardiac perfusion, carotid vessels, implantable cardioverter defibrillators and inguinal hernia; and the specialty reviews include: ophthalmology (stage 2); paediatric surgery, radiation oncology; ear, nose and throat surgery; and skin services.