

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2013-14 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 8

Question No: 418

Topic: Residential Care

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Polley asked:

Dementia is on track to be one of the major health issues, with nearly 1 million sufferers expected by 2050 – up from 257,000 in 2010. In 2012 it was included as the ninth National Health Priority Area. How will the Department of Social Services be guided by the Department of Health in determining the health issues impacting older Australians? What structures and processes are being established to ensure that the delivery of aged care services is informed by medical research?

Answer:

Existing senior management networks will be continued to ensure information exchange on programs that seek to develop the capacity of aged care sector in providing complex care to clients, including palliative care and dementia care. In addition, program-specific networks will be maintained between the relevant areas within the Department of Social Services and the Department of Health.

In addition the NHMRC has a number of structures in place to support ongoing research into dementia and translation into practice.

An NHMRC Partnership Centre was established in 2013 on Dealing with Cognitive and Related Functional Decline in Older People partnering with the aged care providers HammondCare (NSW), Helping Hand Age Care (SA), Brightwater Care Group (WA) and Alzheimer's Australia. The Department of Social Services is represented on the Governance Authority of the Centre.

The Centre will focus on a range of issues including improved aged care service planning, reducing stigma around cognitive decline, improving the size and quality of the aged care workforce, promoting responsible medication management and implementing proven models of care.

In addition to the Partnership Centre, there are three Dementia Collaborative Research Centres (DCRCs) which focus on Assessment and Better Care, Carers and Consumers and early Diagnosis and Prevention.

Through the Department of Social Services the government supports two programs, namely the Dementia Training Study Centres and the Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Services, which work collaboratively with the DCRCs. These links will be maintained.