

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-14, 20 November 2013

Question: E13-220

OUTCOME: 2 – Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme data

Type of Question: Hansard Page 117, 20 November 2013

Senator: Peris

Question:

What is the average annual payment or concession provided under the PBS to Territorians, and how it compares to the national average?

Answer:

People in the Northern Territory have three ways in which to receive access to subsidised medicines: through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), Closing the Gap – PBS Co-payment Measure; and the Section 100 Remote Area Aboriginal Health Service (RAAHS) Programme.

The PBS is available to all Australian residents who hold a current Medicare card. Only those eligible for the PBS will receive subsidised medication and every time they present their script to the pharmacist, they need to provide their Medicare card. The co-payment is the amount the patient pays towards the cost of their PBS medicine. Many PBS medicines cost a lot more than the patient actually pays as a co-payment. From 1 January 2014, a general patient pays up to \$36.90 for PBS medicines or \$6.00 if they have a concession card. The Australian Government pays the remaining cost. The amount of co-payment is adjusted on 1 January each year in line with the Consumer Price Index.

The Closing the Gap PBS Co-Payment Measure is one of 14 measures under the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package. In rural and urban settings, the Measure improves access to PBS medicines for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living with, or at risk of, chronic disease. The Measure lowers or removes the patient co-payment for PBS medicines, i.e. eligible general patients pay \$6.00 for each PBS prescription, while eligible concessional patients will receive their PBS medicines for free. Eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients are registered through a general practice participating in the Indigenous Health Incentive under the Practice Incentives Program or a non-remote Indigenous Health Service.

The Section 100 of the RAAHS Programme is administered under section 100 of the *National Health Act 1953*, and allows for the supply of PBS medicines to clients of eligible remote area Aboriginal Health Services at the time of medical consultation without the need for a normal prescription form, and without charge. The Programme aims to address

identified barriers experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in remote areas of Australia in accessing essential medicines through the PBS.

Payments and concessions provided to people in the Northern Territory compared to the rest of Australia is shown below.

PBS data for 2012-13 for Northern Territory and Australia

Note: Numbers are rounded to nearest 100

Note: percentages are rounded to nearest one decimal place

	Scripts		Benefits	
	Northern Territory	% of Australia	Northern Territory	% of Australia
PBS Section 85 and Section 100	666,700	0.3%	\$28,862,800	0.3%
Closing the Gap	(a)	(a)	\$320,000	2.1%
Closing the Gap under co-payment	14,400	3.8%	\$163,500	3.8%
Aboriginal Health Services (b)	711,300	51.2%	\$18,826,700	51.0%
Manual claims for Highly Specialised Drugs in Public Hospitals (b)	14,700	2.2%	\$8,400,900	2.5%
TOTAL (c)	1,408,100	0.7%	\$56,573,800	0.6%
Population as at 31 December 2012 ('000)	236,900	1.0%		

	Scripts		Benefits	
	Northern Territory	National	Northern Territory	National
Data per capita (d)	5.9	8.8	\$238.81	\$388.93

(a) Script numbers included in Section 85 and Section 100.

(b) Patient level data is not available for the Programme. Script numbers refer to the number of packs supplied in bulk to the AHS.

(c) Total PBS expenditure for 2012-13 was \$8.996 billion.

(d) Script numbers refer to both scripts under the PBS and the number of packs supplied in bulk to the AHS.

The Northern Territory accounted for 0.63 percent of national expenditure and 0.7 percent of national script volume with 1.0 percent of the Australian population.

Data for PBS *General Schedule* scripts dispensed in Northern Territory pharmacies in 2012-13

The top 10 scripts in 2012-13 sorted by script numbers and the top 10 scripts in 2012-13 sorted by Australian Government benefits were the following:

Drug name	Scripts	Drug name	Benefits
Atorvastatin	60,297	Atorvastatin	\$2,395,655
Fluticasone + salmeterol	18,591	Fluticasone + salmeterol	\$923,818
Ramipril	17,572	Insulin glargine	\$915,767
Omeprazole	14,248	Etanercept	\$737,397
Metformin	13,889	Adalimumab	\$522,856
Rosuvastatin	13,515	Olanzapine	\$483,046
Irbesartan	13,251	Imatinib	\$479,096
Perindopril	12,565	Rosuvastatin	\$476,182
Paracetamol	12,449	Tiotropium	\$468,245
Venlafaxine	11,296	Risperidone	\$453,903