

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 22 OCTOBER 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Alleged Medicare Fraud – Customer Contact

Question reference number: HS 14

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Hansard page 117

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 December 2015

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) Senator CAMERON: I will go back to Medicare identity fraud. Secretary, how many Medicare customers have been informed by the Department that their identity has been stolen and their rebates diverted?

Ms Campbell: I will ask Mr Withnell to answer that question.

Mr Withnell: With the 369 that we spoke about earlier, a number of those people rang us to advise us that they thought there may be a problem. We contacted the others.

Senator CAMERON: How many rang you?

Mr Withnell: I do not have that figure. We could take that on notice and find out.

- b) Senator CAMERON: What is the longest period that someone may have been the subject of identity theft and that you have not notified them? What is the longest period that you have identified?

Mr Withnell: I would have to take that on notice. I do not have that figure here with me.

.....

Senator CAMERON: Okay, let me try and get back to this again. What is the longest period that you have identified that a citizen may have had identity fraud perpetrated on them? What is the longest period it has taken you to advise that citizen?

Answer:

- a) Following further analysis of the 369 it has been confirmed that 12 are not related to possible identity fraud. Of the remaining 357:
- 218 contacted the Department by letter as a result of the Department sending a letter to customers in April and May 2015 advising them of potential unusual claiming patterns on their Medicare record;
 - 123 contacted the Department's Fraud Hotline and provided a tip-off concerning suspect claiming and/or activity on their Medicare record;
 - 3 contacted the Department by letter and the Fraud Hotline to report suspect claiming and/or activity on their Medicare record; and
 - 13 records have insufficient details on them to identify how the report was made to the Department.

- b) Where there is sufficient evidence of non-compliant activity, the Department will place a block on the affected customer's online account. This will prevent any further activity online while the Department investigates the issue. As part of normal compliance management processes, customers are notified at the conclusion of an investigation if claiming anomalies are found. The Department has processes in place to assist customers re-establish their access to Medicare should a claiming anomaly be confirmed as relating to identity theft.