

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30/31 May 2011

Question: E11-443

OUTCOME 4: Aged Care and Population Ageing

Topic: PRIMARY CARE - DEMENTIA

Written Question on Notice

Senator Boyce asked:

The UK National Audit Office estimates that in the UK each hospital could save an average of £6 million a year by correctly identifying dementia patients, providing more appropriate and timely care, thus reducing length of stay and improving health outcomes.

What action has been taken by the Government in the context of its health and hospital reforms to make hospitals safer places for people with dementia?

Answer:

As part of the National Partnership Agreement on Improving Public Hospital Services, the Commonwealth is providing up to \$1.623 billion from 2010-11 to 2013-14 to states and territories to deliver 1,316 subacute care beds and community based services, including for psychogeriatric care (the care of people with dementia). The subacute care reforms will improve health outcomes, functional capacity and quality of life for dementia and other patients requiring these services.

The Australian Government also provides funding of approximately \$3 million each year for the management of five Dementia Training Study Centres (Training Centres). The aim of the Training Centres is to improve the quality of care and support provided to people living with dementia and their families through the development and upskilling of the dementia care workforce and the transfer of knowledge into practice.

Current activities being implemented through this program which directly related to acute care include an Acute Care Symposium to be held in Brisbane, the Mater Hospital Dementia Education Program and various dementia-specific professional development acute care courses.

The Government also provides funding for a Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service (DBMAS) in each state and territory. The aim of the DBMAS program is to improve quality of life and care for people with dementia and their carers, up skill and assist aged care staff to improve care for people with behaviours related to dementia and ensure care services for people with dementia are responsive to their individual needs and circumstances.

The DBMAS program also includes a 24 hour telephone support on 1800 699 799.

Program providers have reported increasing demand by the acute care sector for this service to provide advice, education and support for staff caring for people with dementia, whose behaviour is impacting on their care.

*The National Action Plan for improving the care of older people across the acute-aged care continuum, 2004-2008*, identified the introduction and uptake of evidence-based clinical guidelines, care pathways and streamlined hospital assessment processes as important strategies for delivery of seamless care for older people.

As part of the National Action Plan, the Commonwealth, states and territories have worked together to produce a *Delirium Care Pathway* which is due for release nationally in 2011. The *Delirium Care Pathways* will build on the *Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Management of Delirium in Older People* by developing pathways for patients/clients, carers and practitioners across care settings, including the community, hospitals and residential aged care facilities.