

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Select Committee on Tobacco Harm Reduction

Tobacco Harm Reduction

13 November 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000717

Prescribing GPs

Spoken

Hansard Page number: 11

Senator: Matthew Canavan

Question:

Senator CANAVAN: Is it still 10 GPs that are registered?

Dr Skerritt: I don't know if it still is, but, frankly, we're not encouraging them at this stage until a final decision is made. Then a new system will be brought in that will make it so much easier.

Senator CANAVAN: So we don't know if there are more than double digits of GPs that can prescribe at this stage. I understand that, under the current model, if you're an authorised prescriber you've got to report to the TGA the number of patients you treat every six months; is that correct? If so, how many patients have been treated in the past six months?

Dr Skerritt: I'd have to take that on notice, but we're not encouraging this system at the moment until a decision is made, and what that decision is—

Senator CANAVAN: Just to clarify that question: I thought there was a model now under the personal importation scheme—I'm not personally familiar with it—where you can get a prescription.

Dr Skerritt: No, it's not under the personal importation scheme. There is a model now whereby you can get e-cigarettes under prescription. But, because it's so easy for anyone to get e-cigarettes without a prescription, the model is trivial.

Senator CANAVAN: Do you have data on how many people have that prescription?

Dr Skerritt: We will have numbers on how many are reported to us.

Senator CANAVAN: If you could get us those numbers on notice that would be great. Thank you.

Answer:

The Therapeutic Goods Administration is aware that there are presently 14 medical practitioners who are prescribing nicotine containing e-cigarettes for smoking cessation.

Two medical practitioners are authorised prescribers for nicotine for inhalation products for smoking cessation. Those medical practitioners are required to submit to the TGA their first twice-yearly report including patient numbers by the end of January 2021. Sponsors are also required to submit reports detailing the number of times a medicine has been supplied by a medical practitioner.

From receipt of the first application for approval for Special Access Scheme B access to nicotine for inhalation products for smoking cessation on 22 June 2020 to date, the TGA has approved 15 applications by 12 separate medical practitioners. This represents supply on 15 separate occasions. As noted in evidence to the committee, these numbers reflect the fact that many individuals are importing nicotine products without medical oversight.