

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

26 May 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000308

Question Subject: PBS Coverage for medical abortion

Type of Question: Written

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

Has any review been undertaken of PBS coverage for medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation?

Answer:

The Department is not aware of any review of this matter.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

26 May 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000334

Question Subject: Access to PPE for midwives

Type of Question: Written

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

What did the Department do to ensure that all midwives in public and private practices had access to appropriate PPE?

Answer:

The National Medical Stockpile (NMS) supplements holdings of drugs and personal protective equipment (PPE) held by state and territory health authorities to support continuity of service provision in the event of a public health emergency.

As at 3 June 2020, more than 32 million masks have been provided to the States and Territories to support frontline healthcare workers in the public hospital system in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Midwives in the public sector are eligible to access the requisite PPE via their state/territory health authorities which includes supplies provided by the Commonwealth.

Dispatches of PPE have been made from the NMS to Primary Health Networks (PHNs) to supplement primary care supplies. PHNs are able to distribute masks to Nurse-practitioner owned or led primary care practices in their area.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Health

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

Australian Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

26 May 2020

PDR Number: IQ20-000337

Question Subject: Shortages of PPE in rural and remote aged care facilities

Type of Question: Written

Senator: Rachel Siewert

Question:

Have you had reports over the last month of shortages of PPE in rural and remote aged care facilities?

Answer:

Requests for PPE from services with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 are eligible for assistance from the National Medical Stockpile. Priority is also given to aged care services where there is a concern about the safe continuity of quality care. All facilities that have experienced an outbreak of COVID-19 have had their requests for PPE met. Additionally, many aged care services that did not experience an outbreak also requested supplies of PPE. In some instances, these have been accommodated even though they do not meet the National Medical Stockpile criteria for supply.

Since 1 May 2020, there have been 68 enquiries from aged care services about access to personal protective equipment (PPE) from the National Medical Stockpile. Of these, 12 aged care services self-identified as being located in a remote or rural region, none of which were the subject of a confirmed case of COVID-19. Nonetheless, four of those services were distributed masks. The other eight requests were either: withdrawn by the service as PPE had been sourced, or directed to a list of PPE suppliers available on the Therapeutic Goods Administration's Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods.