



Australian Government

Australian Government response to the
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and
Ageing report:

Discussion paper on the late effects of
polio/post-polio syndrome

November 2014

Government response to recommendations

Recommendation One:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Bureau of Statistics and/or the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare establish mechanisms through inclusion of appropriate questions in existing health and/or disability surveys to estimate and report on the size of the population of polio survivors living in Australia, and the proportion of that population experiencing the late effects of polio/post-polio syndrome.

Response:

The Australian Government agrees with the recommendation. Post-polio syndrome and Polio may be reported as health conditions by respondents in the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) Australian Health Survey (AHS). The ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers also collects this information where it is associated with disability. The Government notes, however, that low prevalence conditions such as Post-polio syndrome are difficult to measure accurately through sample surveys.

Recommendation Two:

The Committee recommends that the relevant National Boards, in consultation with key stakeholders including peak professional bodies, medical/health educators and training providers, seek to ensure curricula for students includes information on the late effects of polio/post-polio syndrome, to raise awareness of the condition as a possible diagnostic outcome and of best practice for treatment and management.

Response:

Under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for health practitioners, established under State and Territory legislation, curricula for medical and other health practitioners is established by the independent National Boards regulating each profession, and their accreditation bodies. Polio Australia may wish to approach the relevant Boards to discuss curricula content.

Recommendation Three:

The Committee recommends that Medicare Locals actively engage with Polio Australia and the state-based post-polio associations, with state and territory government departments of health, and with general practitioners to promote activities which will raise awareness of the late effects of polio/post-polio syndrome:

- among practicing health professionals through continuing professional development; and
- in the community through patient education, noting the need to tailor communication to enhance engagement with specific population groups taking into account demographic factors such as age and cultural background.

Response:

During 2014-15 the Government will be moving from Medicare Locals to Primary Health Networks. The Department will take into account the response to the recommendation in development work for the primary care sector as appropriate.