

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 24 FEBRUARY 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: GP Super Clinics

Question reference number: HS 27

Senator: Fierravanti-Wells

Type of question: Hansard CA pages 117-118

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Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) **Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS** - I might say the areas where I have questions. I have questions regarding Medicare provider numbers and a question on the Medicare provider number legislation, some general billing questions and then the dental program. Ms McNally, you have details in relation to the location of the 64 GP superclinics that the government has announced at various stages in recent years?

Ms McNally - No. I do not have that information with me. I could take that on notice.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS - Yes. Do I have to give you a list of the 64 or can you procure that?

Ms McNally - I can procure that.

- b) **Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS** - For each of the locations where these GP superclinics are—and there are only eight that are operational - can you tell me what the Medicare utilisation level is for each of those locations?

Ms McNally - We would not have that information readily available. We would have to run a query to provide that level of information.

- c) **Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS** - I will ask the questions and then I will let you deal with them appropriately on notice. Can you give me the average Medicare utilisation level? Do you have that statistic?

Ms McNally - We can take that on notice.

- d) **Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS** - I can then ascertain whether the utilisation level for each of those is above or below the national average. In relation to each of those 64 GP superclinic locations, can you tell me what the level of safety net benefits is as well and what the national average of safety net benefits is for each of those? Can you take that on notice?

Ms McNally - Yes. One of the issues around providing that kind of data is that we have to run it on a postcode basis, so, in terms of where the services are delivered, people may come from other areas outside the actual postcode.

- e) **Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS** - I appreciate that it will come to me with that qualifier and you will state that it is put on that basis. Those are my questions in relation to Medicare utilisation. In relation to Medicare provider numbers, obviously without identifying any individual medical practices or any individual medical practitioner, how many Medicare provider numbers have been issued in total to the nine GP superclinics that are operational? Do you have that?

Ms McNally - No.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS - Will you take that on notice?

Ms McNally - Yes.

- f) **Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS** - And also could you provide the remaining 27 GP superclinics from the 2007-08 election commitment, which are still not operational, and the 28 GP superclinics which are the 2010-11 commitments? Could you also take on notice how many of the provider numbers that I have referred to have been issued to medical practitioners who are recognised as general practitioners by Medicare Australia? How many services have been billed to Medicare against the provider numbers and how many services have been billed to Medicare against the provider numbers issued to medical practitioners who are recognised as general practitioners by Medicare Australia? Do you understand that?

Ms McNally - Yes. We will take those on notice. Again, we will have to add some qualifiers if that happens to identify individuals.

Answer:

(a) – (f)

For privacy reasons, Medicare Australia is unable to provide Medicare statistics for individual practices. Data on general Medicare utilisation for services processed and benefits paid is available on the Medicare Australia website at https://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/statistics/mbs_group.shtml. Average Medicare utilisation level in 2009–10 was 308 million services, which is approximately 14 services per head of population.

For safety net, Medicare Australia made total payments of \$356 million for the 2009-10 financial year, which equates to approximately \$16 per head of population.

The Department of Health and Ageing has policy and program responsibility for GP Super Clinics and information relating to GP Super Clinics, including those that are still not operational, should be obtained from that Department.