

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 24 FEBRUARY 2011 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Individual Healthcare Identifiers

Question reference number: HS 31

Senator: Boyce / Fierravanti-Wells

Type of question: Hansard CA pages 118-120

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 8 April 2011

Number of pages: 2

Question:

a) **Senator BOYCE** - I may not be asking this in the right place, but could we put it on notice? What is the number of individual health identifiers issues in the three categories by Medicare?

Ms Golightly - The three categories being individual, organisation and professional?

Senator BOYCE - Yes....

Ms Golightly - I do not actually have that particular figure here, but we would be able to get - or we will try to - the number of people who have looked on the website.

Senator BOYCE - The number who have looked up their healthcare number

Ms Golightly - People can also ring up and come into a Medicare office and ask, so we will see what sort of statistics we can get.

Ms Kruse - If you have a Medicare online account you can log on to your Medicare online account. You can see your IHI number and you can also see who has accessed it. If you see on there that a doctor or somebody has had access to your IHI you can ring up and let us know if you do not feel that those people should have had access to it.

Senator BOYCE - Has that occurred

Ms Kruse - Not to my knowledge.

Senator BOYCE - Again, could you take that on notice, please. This is very early days and not many people have a reason to do anything about their IHI right now.

Ms Golightly - We can certainly take it on notice. I know that a number of people have rung up and/or looked at what their IHI is. I do not know how many have asked for the log, but we can take that on notice and check

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b) **Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS** - One of the issues that was raised at the inquiry, you would remember, was that because there was a compulsory issuing of numbers to everybody, and you have assigned 23 million, people had objections to having a number assigned to them. I do not want to traverse through all of that. Have there been instances of people who have objected to the fact that they have

had this number issued to them? We did canvass that. Maybe it is just early days yet.

Ms Golightly - I am not aware of any, but we can check that for you

Answer:

- a) Since 1 July 2010 Medicare Australia's Online Service channel has recorded 28,456 thousand activities in relation to individuals accessing the Healthcare Identifier page when visiting their online service account.

There have been two enquiries by people around the date in which the individual's identifier was created.

To date nobody has called to inform Medicare Australia that people have accessed their Healthcare Identifier inappropriately.

Medicare Australia has also recorded 636 enquiries. Of that number 401 enquiries were taken over the dedicated Healthcare Identifiers Service enquiry line, 76 were face to face and 159 were via email/fax/post.

- b) One individual has complained about being assigned an individual identifier. This complaint was received over the phone on 31 August 2010. The individual wished to remain anonymous, which restricted Medicare Australia's ability to provide a formal response.