

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2010-11, 23 February 2011

Question: E11-243

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: BETTER ACCESS

Hansard Page: CA 30

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

[Of the 16.76 million mental health services provided under the initiative (from 1.11.06 to 31.12.10)]. In terms of a breakdown, how many of these people were repeat customers, so more than one GP mental healthcare plan, that sort of detail? Are you able to assist there?

Answer:

The evaluation of Better Access provides information covering the period 2008 to 2009 on the number and percentage of persons who had received Better Access services for the first time in each year (new consumers) and who had used Better Access services prior to that year (existing consumers).

Of the more than 950,000 consumers who had received at least one Better Access service in 2008, more than two thirds (68%) were first-time Better Access users, i.e they had received services for the first time in 2008. Therefore approximately one third (32%) of people were existing consumers i.e they had received at least one Better Access service prior to 2008.

In 2009, more than half (57%) of the 1.1 million consumers served by Better Access were first-time users. Therefore almost half (43%) of people were existing consumers, i.e they had received at least one Better Access service prior to 2009.

Of the more than 555,000 people who had received a GP Mental Health Treatment Plan (MBS item 2710) in 2008, the majority (87%) did so for the first time. Only a small proportion (13%) had received a GP Mental Health Treatment Plan prior to 2008.

This pattern was also similar for 2009. Of the more than 636,000 people who had received a GP Mental Health Treatment Plan in 2009, approximately three quarters (77%) did so for the first time with 23% having received a GP Mental Health Treatment Plan prior to 2009.

Further information on the extent to which Better Access is providing services to new or existing consumers can be found on pp. 54-5 of Component B of the Better Access evaluation at: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/mental-ba-eval-b>