Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2011-2012, 15 February 2012

Question: E12-016

OUTCOME 2: Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: ACCESS TO PHARMACEUTICALS

Written Question on Notice

Senator Siewert asked:

Please update on the progress of the Government's response to the Senate Committee Report. In particular:

a)   What is happening about data release on PBS usage by AHSs?

b)   What are the Forward Estimates for the program and how have they matched up with actual in recent years?

Answer:

A response to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee's Report and Recommendations is being prepared.

a)   The Department of Health and Ageing publishes total expenditure and numbers of Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) items supplied to participating Aboriginal Health Service (AHS) under the Remote Area Aboriginal Health Service (RAAHS) Program for the previous financial year, by state and territory on the Department's website.

        Release of more detailed supply data is subject to compliance with the *National Health Act 1953* and the *Privacy Act 1988*.

        Wherever possible, subject to these privacy requirements, the Department has and will continue to consider applications for the release of data and other statistical material related to any PBS program.

b)   The RAAHS Supply program financial information is reported within Program 2.2: Pharmaceuticals and pharmaceutical services, commencing from page 119 of the Department of Health and Ageing Portfolio Budget Statements 2011-12. The RAAHS Supply program is one part of the overall forward estimates for Concessional and Entitlement expenditure, and these are not broken down into individual components.

        Reporting on expenditure for the RAAHS Supply program is available on the Department's website and it is also provided below.

Financial Year	2007-08 $million	2008-09 $million	2009-10 $million	2010-11 $million
Total Expenditure	32.9	34.1	37.3	43.0