

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2011-2012, 15 February 2012

Question: E12-023

OUTCOME 2: Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: COMMUNITY PHARMACY

Written Question on Notice

Senator Di Natale asked:

Has the Department addressed the recent evaluation of the Home Medicines review program and are any initiatives underway to increase uptake of this program?

Answer:

Yes. A qualitative research project on the Home Medicines Review (HMR) program was undertaken in 2008 by Campbell Research and Consulting, and further public consultation has been undertaken in addition to this project, resulting in changes being implemented to the program from 1 October 2011. These changes are aimed at improving patient access to services.

Prior to 1 October 2011 a patient could be referred to any community pharmacy under the HMR program. The community pharmacy then arranged for the HMR to be undertaken by an accredited pharmacist on their staff or by an accredited pharmacist contracted to that community pharmacy. Changes made as a result of the Research Project and public consultation mean that from 1 October 2011 the HMR program was expanded to enable a patient to be referred to either a community pharmacy or direct to an accredited pharmacist.

Stemming from the qualitative research project and public consultations, a hospital referral pathway is currently being developed and is expected to be implemented during 2012. The referral pathway is aimed at ensuring patients at high risk of medicine misadventure can be referred for a HMR in the immediate post-discharge period from a hospital. This pathway is being developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders, including peak pharmacy organisations.

The introduction of MedsCheck and Diabetes MedsCheck services in 2011-12 also enable people to have their medicines checked in a pharmacy, which has provided an alternative to having medicines checked in the home.