

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2011-2012, 15 February 2012

Question: E12-134

OUTCOME 7: Hearing Services

Topic: AUSTRALIAN HEARING CENTRES - REHABILITATION PLUS EVALUATION

Written Question on Notice

Senator Boyce asked:

- a) Does the department collect information on satisfaction rates with its hearing programs, including Rehab Plus?
- b) What are the recorded satisfaction rates?
- c) What are the main reasons for dissatisfaction?
- d) How do these results compare with satisfaction rates for other Government services such as in disability etc?
- e) What is the department doing to improve satisfaction rates? Are providers being provided training etc to improve satisfaction rates? Please list all measures the department is taking.

Answer:

- a) The Department of Health and Ageing periodically conducts surveys of voucher client satisfaction. These looked at self-reported client satisfaction/dissatisfaction with their hearing aids, contracted Hearing Service Providers and the Office of Hearing Services. Information on the Rehabilitation Plus program was collected as part of the 2010 Survey.
- b) The methodology and questions used to assess client satisfaction have varied over time and not all measures of client satisfaction have been used in all surveys. In the period from 2002 to 2008 client's indicated a very high level satisfaction with their hearing services provider ranging between 91 percent to 97 percent, a high level of satisfaction with the Office of Hearing Services of approximately 80 percent and a similar level of satisfaction with their hearing aids ranging from 74 percent to 81 percent.
- c) The methodology and questions used to assess client dissatisfaction have varied over time and not all measures of client dissatisfaction have been used in all surveys. Results from previous surveys (2002 to 2008) indicate that around 2-3 percent of voucher clients were dissatisfied with their hearing service provider, 2 percent of clients indicated they were dissatisfied with the Office of Hearing Services and a similar proportion of clients (2 percent) expressed dissatisfaction with their hearing aids.

- d) No comparison with satisfaction rates in other government agencies have been made.
- e) The Department does not have a specific project of work aimed at improving any particular satisfaction rate statistics, nor does it directly provide 'training' to providers. It does however have a quality assurance framework in place to ensure the provision, and continuous improvement, of quality services to clients. The framework includes:
- approval of service providers,
 - guidelines and standards;
 - audit and compliance activities against contractual obligations, guidelines and standards;
 - practitioner registration (includes the requirement to maintain clinical competency as certified by an approved professional body);
 - a dedicated Provider Line and email address; and
 - a complaints handling process.