

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2011-2012, 15 February 2012

Question: E12-165

OUTCOME 12: Health Workforce Capacity

Topic: DISTRICT OF WORKFORCE OPERATIONS & EXEMPTIONS

Written Question on Notice

Senator Boyce asked:

- a) Have the s19AB Guidelines been amended in the last two years?
- b) How many times has it been amended?
- c) Please detail what these amendments were, when they were made and the reason for the change?
- d) Are the guidelines used by decision makers publicly available, and if not why not?

Answer:

- a) The Guidelines for Section 19AB of the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (the Act) are currently being amended following a review of the Guidelines and underpinning Districts of Workforce Shortage arrangements in 2011.
- b) The Section 19AB Guidelines are currently being amended. This is the first time the Guidelines have been amended since they were made in 2001.
- c) The Department of Health and Ageing is currently in the process of amending Guideline provisions to provide a clearer understanding of the factors that may be considered when assessing a section 19AB exemption application, and to clarify the assessment of applications made under certain provisions within the Guidelines, including the spousal exemption applications.
- d) The Section 19AB Guidelines that are used by the Department when assessing applications for exemptions under section 19AB of the Act are available online at the Com Law website: [www.comlaw.gov.au](http://www.comlaw.gov.au)

The Section 19AB Guidelines are supported by supplementary information in the form of detailed fact sheets outlining the operation of the Medicare provider number restrictions to provide additional advice concerning the operation of section 19AB of the Act to overseas trained doctors and foreign graduates of an accredited medical school.

The supplementary information is available on the Department's website at [www.health.gov.au/](http://www.health.gov.au/)