

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2011-2012, 15 February 2012

Question: E12-176

OUTCOME 12: Health Workforce Capacity

Topic: DISTRICT OF WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

Written Question on Notice

Senator Boyce asked:

Why does the District of Workforce Shortage classification not take into account this extended model of care?

Answer:

Districts of workforce shortage (DWS) are determined using the latest Medicare billing statistics, which account for all active Medicare billing and the Australian Bureau of Statistics population data. Any private extended services that are provided within an area and billed to Medicare are therefore reflected within the DWS status of the area.

Medical services provided within the public health system are not reflected within the Medicare billing statistics and do not affect the DWS status of an area.

It should also be noted that the after-hours period is considered to meet the requirements of DWS across Australia for all medical specialties. Any Overseas Trained Doctors or Foreign Graduates of an Accredited Medical School who is seeking to provide extended care during the after-hours period will not be restricted from doing this under section 19AB of the Act.

The Department of Health and Ageing defines the after-hours period as:

- 6pm to 8am Monday to Friday; and
- All day Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays.