

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2011-2012, 15 February 2012

Question: E12-361

OUTCOME 11: Mental Health

Topic: MENTAL HEALTH PATIENTS' ADMISSION AND DISCHARGE TIMES FROM EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

Written Question on Notice

Senator Fierravanti-Wells asked:

Please provide clarification regarding comments in an article in the Adelaide Advertiser, 9 November 2011 entitled Mental health admissions fail time target, including:

- a) Statistics available to the Commonwealth regarding admissions and discharges of mental health patients from state and territory emergency departments.
- b) Statistics in relation to targets for mental health patients.

Answer:

The article in the Adelaide Advertiser of 9 November 2011 refers to hospitals failing to admit mental health patients presenting to emergency departments within an 18-hour target. The Commonwealth is unaware of any 18 hour admission target for mental health patients presenting to emergency departments.

a) and b)

The *National non-admitted patient emergency department care national minimum dataset* collects data on waiting times for patients presenting to emergency departments. However diagnosis and presenting problems are currently not collected as part of this data set, so it is not possible to determine the waiting times specific to mental health patients.