

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2011-2012, 15 February 2012

Question: E12-375

OUTCOME 3: Access to Medical Services

Topic: MEDICARE BENEFITS SCHEDULE ITEMS

Written Question On Notice

Senator Bernardi asked:

- a) How many MBS items were re-evaluated in the last year?
- b) Is there a system set up to ensure that items are regularly re-evaluated?
- c) If not, why not?
- d) If so, how regularly is this enforced?

Answer:

- a) Four demonstration reviews which commenced under the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Quality Framework in 2010 are being finalised under the Comprehensive Management Framework for the MBS (CMFM). These reviews saw the re-evaluation of various MBS items. The review topics were ophthalmology, pulmonary artery catheterisation, colonoscopy, and obesity surgery.

The ophthalmology review is being undertaken in two-stages given the volume of items assessed. The first-stage of the review assessed 61 items, while the second-stage (which commenced in 2011) will assess a further 22 items. The pulmonary artery catheterisation review assessed eight MBS items, and the colonoscopy review considered two items. Finally, the obesity review assessed six items.

These reviews are nearing completion and are expected to be finalised and advice provided to the Government in 2012.

- b) A systematic approach to reviewing existing MBS items is an important component of the CMFM. The CMFM, announced in the 2011-12 Budget, aims to better align MBS reimbursement with evidence-based best clinical practice. Reviews will assess selected existing MBS items for evidence of their quality and safety to ensure that items listed on the MBS remain clinically relevant and are appropriately claimed.
- c) N/A.
- d) Under the CMFM, a program of reviews is being implemented, including five whole of specialty reviews and 11 rapid reviews between 2011-12 and 2012-13.