

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 13 & 15 February 2013

Question: E13-055

OUTCOME 2: Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: Chemotherapy Drugs

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Senator Boyce

Question:

On top of the cumulative Price Disclosure related cuts (now worth about \$200 million in annualised and recurrent savings to the Government), had DoHA been advised by advanced care pharmacists and the Pharmacy Guild this may well be the last straw and community pharmacies – which are already absorbing the funding shortfall caused by the cuts (at \$1 million a week) will be forced to collapse or pass the costs onto cancer clinics and hospitals? Either way, cancer patients may have their time critical treatment disrupted.

Answer:

The Department of Health and Ageing has sought information and evidence on the expected impact of price disclosure changes on chemotherapy services and is aware of the assertion that \$1 million is being lost per week by pharmacies as a result of the price disclosure of Docetaxel. No evidence has been provided to the Department that would allow this claim to be substantiated.

The Department is continuing to engage closely with a range of stakeholders in relation to the efforts of price disclosure reductions on chemotherapy services, and has been negotiating in good faith with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia with a view to resolving this issue as quickly as possible.