

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 13 & 15 February 2013

Question: E13-201

OUTCOME 13: Acute Care

Topic: Organ Donors

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Senator Richard Di Natale

Question:

According to a recent New England Journal of Medicine article "Estimating the Number of Potential Organ Donors in the United States", the estimated number of potential donors in the United States is 48.8 per million people. In Australia this number is 22.61 per million people according to data in reports referred to by the CEO of the Authority in Additional Estimates. In Additional Estimates, the CEO also commented that only 1% of people who die in hospitals are potential donors. How does the Department explain the difference between the United States and Australia in this regard? What specific steps is the Authority taking to identify more donors?

Answer:

The article 'Estimating the number of potential organ donors in the United States *N Engl J Med* 2003; 349:667-74' is 10 years old and based on data from 1997 to 1999. The Question on Notice states that the potential donors per million population in the United States is 48.8. No reference to this statistic could be found in the article.

It is difficult to compare data sets that are 10 years apart. There are major differences in the healthcare systems for Australia and the United States. As a result therefore, no comment is made regarding the difference between the United States and Australia in this regard.