

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015, 25 February 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000145

OUTCOME: 3 - Access to Medical and Dental Services

Topic: Co-payments

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: McLucas, Jan

Question:

When did the Department of Health first become aware of a proposal to cut rebates for GP services for non-concessional patients and people aged over 16? And

- a) When did the Department begin drafting the regulation to effect this change
- b) When did the Department receive instructions that this measure would not proceed?

Answer:

The proposal to reduce rebates by \$5.00 for GP attendances for non-concessional patients and people aged over 16 was developed as part of the 2015 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook process.

On 9 December 2014, the Prime Minister, the Hon Tony Abbott MP, and the then Minister for Health and Minister for Sport, the Hon Peter Dutton MP, announced the *A Strong and Sustainable Medicare* package. The Department began work to draft the required legislative changes to implement this package following this announcement.

On 3 March 2015, the Minister for Health and Minister of Sport, the Hon Sussan Ley MP, announced the \$5 rebate reduction and optional co-payment for GP consultations, scheduled to commence on 1 July 2015, would no longer proceed.