

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000060

OUTCOME: 1 - Population Health

Topic: Drug Strategy

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Gallagher, Katy

Question:

The \$241.5 million ice package is being in part funded by money diverted from mental health (\$141 million) and Indigenous health (\$78.6 million). At the estimates hearings Dr Southern confirmed that the remaining \$20 million will be funded by “other savings”. There are several other components of the total ice task force spend including an additional \$13 million to introduce new MBS items for Addiction Medicine Specialists to increase the availability of treatment; an additional \$24.9 million to help families and communities by providing the resources, information and support they need to respond to ice; an additional \$18.8 million to establish better research, evidence and guidelines on ice, including a new Centre for Clinical Excellence for Emerging Drugs of Concern. Where will the funding come for these components?

Answer:

The figures quoted in the question incorporate funding beyond the forward estimates and outside the ice package.

The *Australian Government's Response to the National Ice Taskforce Final Report* package as reported in MYEFO 2015-16 shows total expenditure over the forward estimates of \$212.1 million. This expenditure is fully offset by the savings identified in *Mental Health — streamlining* (\$141.0 million) and funds redirected from *Indigenous Australian Health Programme* (\$78.6 million).

The listing of new items for addiction medicine on the Medicare Benefits Schedule at \$9.1 million across the forward estimates is part of the *Medicare Benefits Schedule — new and amended listings* MYEFO measure. This measure was offset across aggregated savings measures in MYEFO that are not attributable to the *Australian Government's Response to the National Ice Taskforce Final Report* package.