

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000068

OUTCOME: 3 - Access to Medical and Dental Services

Topic: MBS Review

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Gallagher, Katy

Question:

Prior to the announcement of the latest stage of the MBS Review the Minister's office distributed to a number of media outlets, in confidence, a document of cases studies which were alleged to be examples of MBS Expenditure that was "not necessary, wasteful, sometimes even harmful for patients". How many of the items on this list have been recommended for removal.

Answer:

It appears this question relates to a document distributed around the time of the release of the MBS Review Taskforce's (the Taskforce) consultation paper in September 2015.

The question was answered at the Supplementary Budget Estimates hearing on 21 October 2015 (p.39, 41):

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Senate_Estimates/claccte/estimates/sup1516/index

Senator McLUCAS: Did the department have any role in drafting a document entitled 'Low-value services', which was selectively distributed to a number of journalists the night before the announcement was made?

...

Mr Stuart: I do recognise the material in this paper. This is based on information provided by the department to the minister's office ahead of the release of the discussion paper. It is based on national and international understanding in relation to some practices that have lower value or may be being done too frequently. And these are the kinds of issues that come up in the Choosing Wisely work that is independently done. That is not to say that these are things that should never be done, and that is part of the difficulty and the complexity. They are certainly not things that should never be done but they are things that tend to be done too often.

Separate to the September to November consultations, from 18 December 2015 to 8 February 2016, the Taskforce undertook public consultation about obsolete items recommended by the first tranche of clinical committees:

<https://consultations.health.gov.au/medicare-reviews-unit/mbs-review-taskforce-obsolete-items1>.

None of items contained in the ‘document of case studies’ were included in the initial list of obsolete items in the consultation paper.