

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000072

OUTCOME: 3 - Access to Medical and Dental Services

Topic: Pathology and Diagnostic Imaging Cuts

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Gallagher, Katy

Question:

- a) When is it anticipated that the Mid-Year Budget changes to pathology and diagnostic imaging will be tabled?
- b) Will these be tabled as separate regulations, or included in the general Medicare Schedule?
- c) Does the Department expect bulk billing rates to decline once the changes to pathology and diagnostic imaging commence?
- d) What modelling has the department undertaken to underpin this assumption?

Answer:

- a) This is a decision for Government.
- b) This is a decision for Government.
- c) It is expected that bulk billing rates will remain high in line with historical trends.
- d) The analysis supporting the measure is based on the historical trends for bulk billing. Prior to the introduction of the incentives in 2009, pathology bulk billing was at 86.3 per cent and is currently 87.6 per cent.

For diagnostic imaging, bulk billing rates have increased each consecutive year for a decade, from 59.4 per cent in 2004-05 to 76.9 per cent in 2014-15. The introduction of the incentives in 2009 did not alter the growth trend.