

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

**Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016**

**Ref No: SQ16-000111**

**OUTCOME:** 11 – Ageing and Aged Care

**Topic:** Dementia

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Polley, Helen

**Question:**

- a) Outline in details how the Department is coordinating improvements in dementia services in the health system and implementation the National Dementia Framework?
- b) What are the significant issues that have been raised?
- c) How are these being addressed?

**Answer:**

- a) The Department of Health coordinates improvements in dementia services through both funding to support a range of programmes that assist people with dementia, and their carers and families, and through the redesign of dementia programmes in order to ensure a more consistent national approach.

*The National Framework for Action on Dementia 2015-2019 (NFAD):*

- is a COAG Health Ministers' document that each Minister is responsible for implementing within their own jurisdictions;
- guides the development, implementation and coordination of policies, plans and actions to reduce risk and improve outcomes for people with dementia;
- supports ongoing policy development and action for governments, peak bodies, service providers, and the broader community.

The Department has taken the following action in relation to the NFAD's seven priority areas for action:

**1. Increasing awareness and reducing risk**

The Australian Government has announced, as part of the streamlined approach to dementia care and support, that it will work with stakeholders to develop an improved range of consumer support programmes to help care for people with dementia across the life-cycle of the disease, and improve consistency of support for them and their carers. These new programmes will commence from July 2017.

## 2. The need for timely diagnosis

The new approach to dementia care announced by Minister Ley on 25 January 2016 includes an open approach to market to engage a single national provider to deliver a dementia education programme combining the Dementia Training Study Centres and the Dementia Care Essentials programmes and establishing a single national provider (replacing eight separate state/territory based providers) to deliver the Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service from October 2016.

## 3. Accessing care and support post diagnosis

The new approach to dementia care will involve streamlining the design, development and outcomes of dementia programmes and services to support enhanced services for people with dementia and their carers. This aligns with the broader aged care reforms the Government is implementing to assist people to access timely care and support. It also includes an open approach to market to engage a single national provider to deliver the Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service from 1 October 2016.

The new national approach will complement the existing Severe Behaviour Response Teams (SBRTs) initiative which provides a mobile workforce of clinical experts supporting residential aged care providers to support residents with severe behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia. National operation of the SBRTs commenced on 2 November 2015.

## 4. Accessing ongoing care and support

The Government established My Aged Care as the main entry point to the aged care system in Australia which will make it easier for older people, their families, and carers to access information on ageing and aged care, have their needs assessed and be supported to locate and access services available to them in their local area.

## 5. Accessing care and support during and after hospital care

Whilst this is primarily a State and Territory responsibility, there are a number of projects funded by the Government to date through the Improving Acute Care Services for People with Dementia initiative, in particular:

- The Ballarat Health Service's national trial of the Dementia Care in Hospitals Program to improve acute care outcomes for people with cognitive impairment through the use of a visual bedside alert symbol and training for hospital staff on appropriate care for patients with cognitive impairment;
- The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health review of the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards as they relate to the care of people with cognitive impairment, and promotion of the Standards to assist hospital staff in the care and management of people with dementia in acute care.

## 6. Accessing end of life and palliative care

The Government funds a consortium of Australian health organisations, including Austin Health and Palliative Care Australia, to deliver the DecisionAssist service to provide advice and assistance to aged care services and primary health care providers. The service model includes evidence based clinical advice and a national free call service providing referral to services in a local area to assist with advance care planning and palliative care.

## 7. Promoting and supporting research

The Government funds research into dementia prevention and cure to ensure the provision of quality services for people with dementia, their families and carers. As part of the 2014 Budget, the Government announced \$200 million over five years to boost dementia research into ways to prevent or cure dementia.

Of the \$200 million for dementia research, \$50 million is allocated to the National Health and Medical Research Council's National Institute of Dementia Research (the Institute) with the mandate to prioritise and boost dementia research in Australia and provide the focus to rapidly translate evidence into policy and practice. Alzheimer's Australia was successful in winning the contract to establish the Institute, which will specifically ensure better integration with international research and a focus for rapid translation of evidence from paper to policy and practice.

- b) A second Ministerial Dementia Forum was convened in Melbourne in November 2015 with participation from service providers, clinicians, people with dementia and their carers. Key issues raised at the forum included empowering consumers, promoting community awareness, service linkages and research. Issues regarding the current alignment and efficiency of the available suite of dementia programmes were also highlighted by the Analysis of Dementia Programmes, which was released before this forum and discussed by participants.
- c) The Government is addressing these issues raised by the Analysis and the second Ministerial Dementia Forum through the new approach to dementia support announced on 25 January 2016. This includes the redesign and consolidation of several key programmes (as mentioned above) to streamline service provision to people with dementia, their carers, and families.