

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

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

**Ref No:** SQ16-000206

**OUTCOME:** 3 - Access to Medical and Dental Services

**Topic:** ELISA Tests

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

**Senator:** Madigan, John

**Question:**

How many people have been tested for Lyme disease (*B. burgdorferi*, *B. afzelii*, *B. garinii*) using ELISA tests that were Medicare funded, by year, since 2000?

**Answer:**

It is not possible to determine the number of ELISA assays performed under Medicare for the purpose of diagnosing Lyme disease.

Whilst ELISA assays may be performed under a range of items listed on the Medicare Benefits Schedule, there is no item specific for ELISA assay analysis to detect infection with a pathogen.

The Pathology Services Table under Medicare provides rebates for a range of pathology tests used in the diagnosis of microbiological infection. However, these are generic, allowing different testing modalities, including ELISA assays and Western blot tests. There is no specific item for ELISA assay analysis, or Western blot testing.

Medicare also does not capture information about patients' test results. Results of pathology tests are a private matter between laboratories, patients, and their treating clinicians.