

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016, 10 February 2016

Ref No: SQ16-000219

OUTCOME: 9 - Biosecurity and Emergency Response

Topic: Lyme Disease

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Madigan, John

Question:

In October [Ref No: SQ15-000759], you reported that “The National Serology Reference Laboratory (NRL) has been contracted to evaluate laboratory tests used in the serological diagnosis of Lyme disease.” And that “the NRL project is commencing. Specimens are being collected. The results will be published in a peer reviewed medical journal.” It is inappropriate for outcomes of tax payer funded contracts to be delayed for publication in research journals, especially when the outcomes are of a public health interest. Patients cannot wait for an academic journal to go through its peer review process before they receive appropriate testing.

- a) Is the evaluation completed? If not, when will it be completed?
- b) Please list all the laboratories that were included in the NRL study?
- c) What is the outcome of the evaluation? If you cannot yet provide the outcome, when will it be made publicly available?

Answer:

- a) The evaluation is due to be completed in early 2017.
- b) Ten laboratory directors have been approached and invited to participate including the Australian Red Cross Blood Service (ARCBS), the Australian Rickettsial Reference Laboratory (ARRL), the Institute for Clinical Pathology and Medical Research (ICPMR), Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology (SNP), Australian Biologics, Pacific Laboratory Medicine Service (PaLMS), IGeneX, Infectolab, Arminlab, and Rare and Imported Pathogens Laboratory (RIPL).
- c) Refer response to (a) above.