

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH PORTFOLIO**

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

**Ref No:** SQ16-000304

**OUTCOME:** 1 - Population Health

**Topic:** Clinical Advisory Group for ME/CFS

**Type of Question:** Hansard Page 132, 10 February 2016

**Senator:** Ludlam, Scott

**Question:**

When are we going to start seeing some action? For example, one of the previous witnesses was speaking of a clinical advisory group into Lyme disease. What would it take—maybe through you, if you like, Senator Nash—to get a clinical advisory group established for ME/CFS sufferers? What is the process? I am looking for any suggestions, bright ideas, from anybody at the table or in the room, because there is nothing going on.

**Answer:**

A clinical advisory committee is a time-limited group of mostly clinical experts in a particular field, which is formed to provide advice to the Chief Medical Officer on a relevant activity or research area identified by the Department of Health. For example, the Clinical Advisory Committee on Lyme Disease (now ceased) was established to provide advice on areas such as identifying supporting evidence, best practice laboratory diagnostic testing and the most appropriate treatments in relation to Lyme Disease.

The Department of Health has no plans to establish a clinical advisory group on Myalgic encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) at this stage. The opportunity to address ME/CFS issues lies in the development of a National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions, which is currently underway through the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council process. The strategic framework moves away from a disease specific approach to provide high level guidance to support the delivery of a more effective and coordinated national response to chronic conditions, including for ME/CFS.