

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017, 1 March 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000080

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: MBS Payments

Type of Question: Hansard Page 121, 1 March 2017

Senator: Griff, Stirling

Question:

Senator GRIFF: What proportion of total funding was for urgent after-hours visits, specifically items that—

Mr Cormack: That is a different outcome. I think you are talking about the MBS payments—is that right?

Senator GRIFF: Yes.

Mr Cormack: We will take that on notice as well, because it is in one of the earlier outcomes.

Senator GRIFF: I understand that the amount of MBS rebates being paid for urgent after-hours services is escalating significantly, and that it has doubled between 2010 and 2015.

Mr Cormack: Same; we will have to take that on notice.

Senator GRIFF: I will send you separate questions regarding that. Also, as it turns out, my home state is the heaviest user of item 597, but again I will send that to you. Do you actually know the proportion of those patients that attend their usual GP the following day?

Mr Cormack: No. We will take it on notice. I am not sure we will be able to answer that; it is more in the MBS world.

Senator GRIFF: According to various news articles, many of these after-hours GP services rely on less-experienced or overseas-trained doctors. Is there any concern over the standard of care that these doctors are providing?

Mr Cormack: I think that is not necessarily a question we can answer. The medical board would have a view on whether doctors are appropriately qualified or not in that context. The MBS review process is actually looking at the whole after-hours issue, so we will take that on notice and deal with it in that context.

Answer:

Please refer to the response provided to Question on Notice SQ17-000204.