

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017, 1 March 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000231

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: MBS Review Taskforce

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Griff, Stirling

Question:

- a) How many of these clinical committees have reported back to the Taskforce so far?
- b) Is this a satisfactory rate of response after almost two years?
- c) When do you expect the remainder will report to the Taskforce?

Answer:

- a) The Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review Taskforce has finalised the recommendations prepared by 5 Clinical Committees and the first report of its Principles and Rules Committee. In addition the Taskforce has approved the Reports of 9 Clinical Committees for public consultation.
- b) The Taskforce is an independent clinician-led review reporting to the Minister and thus far the progress of the Committees is a matter for the Taskforce rather than the Department. As at 30 March 2017, there are 18 Clinical Committees as follows:
 - Diagnostic Imaging
 - Ear, Nose and Throat Surgery
 - Gastroenterology
 - Obstetrics
 - Pathology
 - Thoracic Medicine
 - Cardiac
 - Dermatology, Allergy and Immunology
 - Endocrinology
 - Intensive Care and Emergency Medicine
 - Oncology
 - Renal
 - Spinal Surgery
 - Anaesthesia
 - General Practice and Primary Care
 - Gynaecology
 - Orthopaedics
 - Diagnostic Medicine

Some of these Clinical Committees also have Working Groups (48 to date).

As at 1 March 2017, there have been approximately 240 meetings held on these Clinical Committees and Working Groups. 57 per cent of the MBS items have been reviewed or are in the process of being reviewed. Experience from previous Clinical Committees is that it will be 10 months (approximately) from establishment to public consultation, but this will depend on the work-plan the Committee agrees to. Committees have differential workloads, such as:

- Some have relatively small number of MBS items to review, but require in-depth consideration and data analysis, due to complexity
- Others may have a large number of MBS items to review, but are low in complexity and may be completed sooner.

c) No date has been determined.