

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017, 1 March 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000457

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Mental Health Workforce

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: O'Neill, Deborah

Question:

How does the Department advise the Minister if there are enough mental health workers to deliver services and programs? For example, the actions included in the Fifth Mental Health Plan. What work has the Department done to ensure activities in the plan can be met with the current workforce? If there has been work undertaken, can the Department provide this information.

Answer:

To date, workforce issues have been progressed predominantly at a national level through the Department of Health's representation on the Safety and Quality Partnership Standing Committee of the Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol Principal Committee (MHDAPC) which reports to the COAG Health Council through its advisory body, the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC). These established governance arrangements provide a mechanism for the Australian Government and its New Zealand and state and territory counterparts to discuss matters of mutual interest concerning health policy, services and programs which includes the mental health workforce.

The Fifth National Mental Health Plan (Fifth Plan) has been subject to public consultation and is currently being finalised for consideration by MHDAPC. MHDAPC formally sought feedback on the Fifth Plan from all AHMAC subcommittees, including the Health Workforce Principal Committee.

Once the Plan is finalised, it is expected that the Department will further consider actions required to implement the Plan, with ongoing consultation with key stakeholders.