

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017, 1 March 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000488

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: Child Dental Benefit Schedule - Promotion

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Griff, Stirling

Question:

The chief medical officer's Report on the Third Review of the Dental Benefits Act 2008 found the CDBS program was poorly promoted.

- a) Does the department have any plans to improve promotion of this program? If so, what is planned?
- b) In drafting the CDBS letter, why did the department not replicate the format of the Medicare Teen Dental Plan letter (given this program was replaced by the CDBS, and hence the letter was already a familiar 'voucher' format for many families)?

Answer:

- a) The Department of Human Services continues to issue annual eligibility letters to children eligible for the Child Dental Benefits Schedule.
- b) The Medicare Teen Dental Plan provided benefits for a single service to eligible teens once per year. As such, it was amenable to using a "voucher" to embody the teen's eligibility where an actual voucher was sent to eligible teenagers for a preventative dental check.

The 'voucher' terminology has remained in the legislation, but such a model does not fit well within the Child Dental Benefits Schedule as a child may use multiple services on multiple occasions. The term 'voucher' is no longer used in promotional and information materials. The notification of eligibility, in the form a letter, performs the same legislative function of the 'voucher'.