

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Senate Estimates 2011-2012, 3 June 2011

Question: E11-159

OUTCOME 8: Indigenous Health

Topic: HEPATITIS B IDENTIFICATION, TREATMENT AND CONTROL IN THE INDIGENOUS SECTOR

Written Question on Notice

Senator Boyce, asked:

What programs are specifically allocated to hepatitis B identification, treatment and control in the Indigenous sector and what amount of funding?

Answer:

The national response to blood borne viruses (BBVs) and sexually transmissible infections (STIs) within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is guided by the *Third National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy* and the *National Hepatitis B Strategy 2010-2013*.

Under this framework, the Commonwealth and the states and territories work together providing funds for immunisation and treatment, and funding to community based organisations, and the jurisdictions administering the National Immunisation Program (NIP). States and territories also fund prevention activities.

The Australian Government allocates around \$11 million each year to support projects targeting at improving the sexual health and reducing the transmission of BBVs in the Indigenous sector. The majority of this funding is provided to Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to manage STIs and BBVs as a component of their primary health care services. Funding is also provided to some community based organisations to enhance awareness of STIs and BBVs through education and health promotion activities.

In addition to this funding:

- The Australasian Society for HIV Medicine (ASHM) was funded in 2010-2011 for a range of activities in relation to viral hepatitis and HIV. One specific project for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is the production of a new viral hepatitis resource *Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People in Sexual and Reproductive Health*. ASHM's broader program of activities provides education and training to health care providers in the areas of hepatitis B and hepatitis C, in line with the *National Hepatitis B Strategy 2010-2013*. ASHM addresses Indigenous priority action areas within these activities. The total amount of funding allocated to this program is \$429,561 (GST inclusive.)

- The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) was also funded in 2010-2011 to contribute to hepatitis policy analysis (including hepatitis B) and provide advice to its members and government. This program of activities includes specific analysis of hepatitis B prevention and treatment strategies within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The program alerts Aboriginal health service providers to changes for hepatitis B treatment and management. This program is one component of a broader funding arrangement, totalling \$718,979 (GST inclusive).
- Under the NIP, the Australian Government provides free hepatitis B vaccine to children at birth, 2, 4, 6 and 12 months of age and to children 10-13 years. By the age of two years, 94 per cent of Indigenous children had received the hepatitis B vaccine. Funding provided for hepatitis B vaccine cannot be provided as the hepatitis B vaccine is delivered as part of a combination vaccine.
- The Commonwealth also provides funds for diagnosis and treatment through the Medical Benefits and Pharmaceutical Benefits Schemes. It is not possible to identify amounts spent in relation to Indigenous people.