

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30/31 May 2011

Question: E11-007

OUTCOME 2: Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: PBS DEFERRING OF THE DRUG INVEGA SUSTENNA

Written Question on Notice

Senator Xenophon asked:

- a) In relation to the drug Invega Sustenna (used to treat schizophrenia), what were the reasons for deferring its listing on the PBS?
- b) Did the Government take into account the benefits to schizophrenia sufferers when deciding to defer the drug's approval, or was it a blanket deferral?

Answer:

- a) On 25 February 2011, the Minister for Health and Ageing, the Hon Nicola Roxon MP announced that the Government had approved the listing of seven new medicines and vaccines on the PBS and the National Immunisation Program (NIP). At that time, it was announced that the Government had decided to defer the listing of some other medicines, including medicines for conditions where existing treatments are already available on the PBS. Invega Sustenna was one of the medicines deferred by the Government.

Current fiscal discipline requires that the PBS, NIP and the Life Saving Drugs Program listings be subject to the same Government consideration as other spending measures across the rest of the Health Portfolio and across government generally.

- b) There are other medicines (as long-acting injections) already listed on the PBS to treat schizophrenia. The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) recommendation to list Invega Sustenna on the PBS was made on the basis that it is of similar efficacy and safety to the PBS listed, long-acting injectable medicine - risperidone (Risperdal Consta<sup>®</sup>). The PBAC did take into account that long acting Invega Sustenna is administered once every four weeks whereas injections of risperidone are required fortnightly.

However, in its consideration, the PBAC noted that based on the evidence presented, the claim of superiority in clinical practice of long acting Invega Sustenna over PBS listed long acting injection risperidone was not justified. It is open to the sponsor of the medicine or other parties to submit further information to the PBAC at any time.