

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 30/31 May 2011

Question: E11- 028

OUTCOME 2: Access to Pharmaceutical Services

Topic: ADDITIONAL OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL HEALTH AMENDMENT (PHARMACEUTICAL BENEFITS SCHEME) BILL 2010

Written Question on Notice

Senator Siewert asked:

NHA Amendments – Additional amendments added to amendment.

During the debate in the Senate on the National Health Amendment (Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme) Bill 2010, the Senate agreed to the following amendment:

Hansard Excerpt

*Senator SIEWERT (Western Australia)*

*(7.45pm) – I move the second reading amendment standing in my name:*

*At the end of the motion, add: but the Senate calls on the Government:*

- a) to ensure that there is an annual report to Parliament on all available data on under copayment products, including the drug name and form, the quantities dispensed;*
- b) to table a copy of the annual report by the Access to Medicines Working Group to the Minister for Health and Ageing on the progress and implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Government and Medicines Australia on 6 May 2010, commencing not later than 1 January 2011; and*
- c) to conduct a study of the affordability of prescription medication and access to medicines, including the use of generic medicines.*

Can the Department please give an update on the implementation of the provisions under this amendment?

Answer:

The Department is currently progressing work on these reports.

*Report on available data on under co-payment products*

The first annual report will be provided to the Parliament by 30 September 2013, once one complete financial year of under co-payment data has been captured and analysed by the Department. Under co-payment data collection commences on 1 April 2012 and the first full financial year of data will become available around August 2013.

Reporting on a financial year basis will allow for comparisons to other published Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) data, which is all released on a financial year basis.

### *Progress and implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)*

A report by the Access to Medicines Working Group on the implementation of the MoU will be submitted to the Minister for Health and Ageing in October 2011 and will be tabled in the Parliament by 31 December 2011. The Department and Medicines Australia have commenced development of the report through the Access to Medicines Working Group.

### *Study of affordability and access to medicines*

The Department has proposed a phased approach to reporting in order to meet this obligation. In the first phase, the Department will conduct a scoping study using existing information and develop material on how access and affordability will be measured and how the outcomes will be presented, including the appropriateness of a consolidation process. Development of an interim report has commenced in the Department and it is proposed that this study be completed and provided to the Minister for Health and Ageing by October 2011.

The second phase of the study, resulting in the release of a final report, will include information on under co-payment PBS medicines, for which a full financial year's data will only be available in August 2013. The inclusion of this data is important to present a complete picture on PBS utilisation in the final report.