

## Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

### BUDGET ESTIMATES - 29 MAY 2012 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### Human Services Portfolio

**Topic:** Medicare IT Outages

**Question reference number:** HS 26

**Senator:** Fierravanti-Wells

**Type of question:** Hansard page 120

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 27 July 2012

**Number of pages:** 2

#### **Question:**

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: I just wanted to ask some questions about computer outages.

Ms Campbell: We did answer some of these questions earlier.

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: You did? This covers the period of April this year when they were off air for almost 44 hours.

Ms Campbell: Which computer systems were you thinking of?

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: I have had some information provided to me by software vendors. They have been advised in relation to various amounts of down time for your computer systems. Let us look at some of those outage times. For example, for 26 April it was seven hours, then on 23 April and 19 April. These are the notification dates for various periods of time: 19 April, 17 April, 13 April, 12 April, 4 April, 30 March, 29 March, 26 March and 25 March. These times come up to about 43½ hours.

Ms Campbell: Is there any detail on what computer system they are talking about?

Senator FIERRAVANTI-WELLS: For example, it says, '26 April, time notified 4:49 pm; outage time 11 pm, 28 April, to 6 am 29 April, for seven hours. System maintenance Medicare online and Eclipse production'.

Mr Sterrenberg: We can take that on notice. That does not align with our records but we will take it on notice and come back to you with that information.

#### **Answer:**

The department's Medicare Program delivers high quality computer systems to Australians and external parties. Computer system upgrades are an essential part of improving the quality and availability of Medicare Program systems.

Planned maintenance is performed at times which minimise impact to customers and external parties. Changes to Medicare Program systems are also performed in such a way as to minimise the number of systems which are unavailable at any given time.

The department places the highest priority on the restoration of external facing systems when unplanned events occur.

During April 2012 there were three events which impacted the department's Medicare Program computer systems, one was planned and two were unplanned.

The planned outage occurred on Saturday 28 April commencing at 11:00 pm and ran for two hours. This outage was for application changes for Medicare Online, Eclipse and Medicare Assessing.

There was an unplanned event on Thursday 12 April commencing at 11:25 am that ran for three hours 23minutes, and another event on Thursday 19 April commencing at 10:00 am that ran for one hour 51minutes.

These events caused service degradation to Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, Aged Care System, Eclipse system and some Easyclaim transactions. The degradation was a result of long running database transactions which were causing system processing delays. The problem which caused this degradation has now been fixed.