

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2012-2013, 30 & 31 May and 1 June 2012

Question: E12-029

OUTCOME 12: Health Workforce Capacity

Topic: Clinical Placements

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 2

Senator: Senator Boyce

Question:

- a) Something that has been raised with me on a number of occasions is the limited capacity of the health system to support clinical placements which places limitations on graduate output.
- b) What steps is the government taking to address this?

Answer:

- a) Australia is currently experiencing unprecedented growth in health profession graduates. This is creating significant pressure on training across the continuum of professional-entry courses, and prevocational and vocational medical training.
- b) The Commonwealth Government has implemented a number of programs and initiatives which will enhance the clinical training availability and assist in supporting the health system to cope with the increase in trainees and graduates. In November 2008, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) announced its \$1.6 billion health workforce reform package. A component of that package was the establishment of Health Workforce Australia (HWA) which is responsible for the majority of initiatives announced under this package.

HWA is providing Clinical Training Funding subsidies to support growth in student clinical training placement days. \$425 million is being provided over three years towards increasing the number of clinical training places for health students, including doctors, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals. There is an emphasis on areas which have had limited capacity to undertake clinical training. These include rural and remote settings, mental health and aged care settings.

HWA also manages the Clinical Supervision Support Program (CSSP) which aims to expand clinical supervision capacity and competence across the educational and training continuum. This includes Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, professional entry to

postgraduate students and vocational trainees, for medicine, nursing and midwifery, dental and allied health professions through programs:

- to prepare and train clinical supervisors
- to deliver and develop a competent clinical supervision workforce, which delivers quality training.

HWA is also undertaking a project aiming to contribute to increased capacity of the health system to provide clinical training via the use of simulated learning environment (SLE) modalities. It is examining the problem of insufficient clinical placement positions as well as the need to train healthcare professionals more efficiently and effectively through the adoption of new and innovative training techniques.

In response to increasing pressure on clinical training capacity resulting from increasing medical graduates, the Government committed \$632 million to train more doctors through vocational and pre-vocational training programs including:

- Expansion of the Prevocational General Practice Placements Program to 975 places by 2013
- Increasing the number of places available for medical graduates to become a General Practitioner from 600 to 1,200 per year by 2014
- Increasing the available places in the specialist training program from 360 to 900 per year by 2014.

The majority of clinical placements occur in the public hospital system which is managed by the states and territories. The Commonwealth continues to work collaboratively with states and territories, HWA and other key stakeholders, including through forums such as the Standing Committee on Health, and the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council.