

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: E12-243

OUTCOME 12: Health Workforce Capacity

Topic: Overseas Trained Doctors

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Number of pages: 2

Senator: Senator Di Natale

Question:

- a) Annually, how many overseas-trained doctors recruited to work in Australia are coming from developing countries?
- b) Has the Department performed or is the Department aware of any modelling or estimates of the annual savings in costs to the Australian healthcare system from recruiting overseas trained doctors and nurses?

Answer:

a) The Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) is not responsible for collecting data on health professionals recruited to Australia to work or train in their profession, relying on the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) to supply relevant visa information from its statistical database.

There are three major subclasses of visas (422, 442 and 457) under which most medical practitioners enter Australia on a temporary basis. From 1 April 2005, medical practitioners were encouraged to apply for a Subclass 457 Long Stay Business visa, which allows them to stay for up to 4 years for business purposes, and gives them the flexibility to work as an independent contractor, or for several employers, while having one sponsor.

Following the creation of the flexible working arrangements for International Medical Graduates (IMGs) under the subclass 457 visa, the subclass 422 visa – Medical Practitioner (Temporary) has not been available for new primary visa applicants since 1 July 2010.

Occupational trainee visa (subclass 442) allows people to complete workplace-based training in Australia on a temporary basis in an approved training program. This visa may be valid for up to two years (subject to the length of the approved training program).

The question does not stipulate criteria for defining a country as 'developing', nor does DoHA or DIAC hold a formal definition as such.

DIAC has therefore supplied for reporting purposes the following data based on whether the country of origin of the overseas trained doctor is an OECD member or not.

Table 1. Subclass 422, 442 and 457 primary visa granted between 2006-07 and 2010-11 where the nominated occupation is Australia New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) 253 (Medical Practitioners)

Citizenship Country	Visa Subclass	Financial Year of Visa Grant				
		2006- 07	2007- 08	2008- 09	2009- 10	2010- 11
Non-OECD country	422 Medical Practitioner	310	292	277	168	26
	442 Occupational Trainee	512	409	236	148	151
	Subclass 457 Business (Long Stay)	2,234	2,366	2,112	1,459	1,597
	sub total: Non-OECD country	3,056	3,067	2,625	1,775	1,774
OECD country	422 Medical Practitioner	206	159	148	94	9
	442 Occupational Trainee	341	210	110	103	109
	Subclass 457 Business (Long Stay)	1,291	1,493	1,200	1,214	1,330
	sub total: OECD country	1,838	1,862	1,458	1,411	1,448
Total		4,894	4,929	4,083	3,186	3,222

Source: Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2012 (BE5238.01)

Note 1: ANZSCO was introduced in DIAC on 1 July 2010. Applications lodged prior to that date using the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) 2nd Edition have been converted to an ANZSCO code using a standard DIAC mapping approved by the ABS.

b) The Department has not performed, nor is it aware of any modelling or estimates of the annual savings in costs to the Australian healthcare system that may come from recruiting overseas trained doctors and nurses.