

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: E12-286

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: Organ donation rates

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

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Senator: Senator Di Natale

Question:

According to the Australian Organ and Tissue and Transplantation Authority (the Authority) Performance Report 2011, there were 730 Potential Deceased Organ Donors in Australia in 2011 (or 32.27 potential donors per million population (dpm)).

Dr Jonathon Gillis stated recently at Senate Estimate hearings that there are basically only two performance indicators. One is that 100 per cent of potential donors are approached. This statement presupposes that all potential donors are already being identified in Australia. At the rate referred to in the OTA Performance Report 2011, only 0.49% of all Australians who die each year and 0.94% of all hospital deaths are potential organ donors. What is being done to ensure all potential donors are identified in Australia, in line with the rates being achieved overseas?

Answer:

In order to ensure that potential donors are identified, the Organ and Tissue Authority (OTA) manages a retrospective audit (the DonateLife Audit) of all deaths in the 77 DonateLife Network hospitals around Australia.

The DonateLife Audit uses objective criteria to retrospectively categorise patients as potential donors and is the Authority's key mechanism for ensuring that potential donors are identified.

The DonateLife Audit describes missed donation opportunities as unrealised potential donors. These are patients who the audit categorises as potential donors but for various reasons no request was made to their family for organ donation.

The number of unrealised potential donors is reported within the DonateLife Network at the hospital management and jurisdictional level to facilitate comparison with peer hospitals, identify under performance and further embed best practice.

Unrealised potential donors are also discussed at regular case review meetings which are attended by relevant clinical staff including intensive care doctors and nurses. The outcomes of case review meetings are used to raise awareness about the identification of potential donors and improve clinical practices within the hospitals.

For the same reasons unrealised potential donors are discussed at the national level at clinical governance committee meetings.

International potential donor rates

The DonateLife Audit is a key element of the national reform agenda to implement world best practice, and was identified as one of the primary drivers of change at the clinical level in Spain.

Australia is one of only a few countries in the world that have implemented such an audit and thus despite only being two years into the national reform agenda, is taking a lead in this area.