

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO**

**Budget Estimates 2013-14, 5/6 & 7 June 2013**

**Question: E13-012**

**OUTCOME:** 3 – Access to Medical Services

**Topic:** Rebate Shortfalls

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Boyce

**Question:**

What is your current definition of universal health cover- has that changed over time and if not, is there now a large and growing gap between the concept and reality?

**Answer:**

The definition of universal health cover remains the same - all Australian citizens and permanent residents, except for those on Norfolk Island can receive subsidised medical treatment from health professionals who have been issued a Medicare provider number. Since Medicare was introduced in 1984, the concept of universal health cover has expanded to include not just medical practitioners but eligible midwives, nurse practitioners and allied health professionals. In addition, the range and complexity of medical services subsidised through Medicare has expanded over the years.